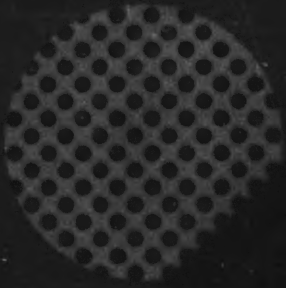
THE UNITED NATIONS AT 50



UNITED NATIONS

NOTES FOR SPEAKERS

The United Nations at 50

Notes for Speakers

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INFORMATION
UNITED NATIONS

Note

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In view of rapid developments, users of this publication are encouraged to seek more up-to-date information. Speakers are also invited to supplement the information in this edition with anecdotes, facts and other illustrative material drawn from local sources such as news media, citizens' groups, government offices, personal experience and contacts.

Notes for Speakers*, it should be emphasized, is not a collection of finished speeches but rather a starting point for speakers, including UN and government officials, academics, media and non-governmental organization representatives, to use in tailoring presentations suited to their own needs and circumstances.*

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Foreword

Fifty years ago, in a bold affirmation of international cooperation, a new organization explicitly mandated to advance peace, human rights, international justice and economic and social development was created. Born of years of devastating war, the United Nations was conceived as an institution that would bring together the countries of the world to work for the progress of all nations and all peoples, as the best way to ensure lasting peace.

Since 1945, the United Nations has faced many challenges. But it has also made progress in every mandate that was outlined by its Charter, and in many instances, far surpassed the hopes of its founders. In the 1960s and 1970s, the United Nations oversaw the mainly peaceful process of decolonization. It has continued to explore new ways to promote peace and security, including developing the concept of peace-keeping and peace-building. United Nations interventions in conflicts have prevented untold death and destruction.

The Organization, promoting the concept of economic justice and social well-being for all citizens of the world, has provided much-needed direction and coherence to economic and social development. It has coordinated international efforts to reduce disease, hunger and suffering everywhere, but always with special attention to the world's most vulnerable populations. The work of its programmes and specialized agencies is felt in all areas of the globe.

Drawing on the age-old values of justice and respect for human life found in all cultures, the United Nations has created a body of universally recognized human rights legislation. Never in history has so much care and attention been given to the definition of political and civil, as well as economic, social and cultural rights. To ensure that these international agreements are implemented, it has worked tirelessly with Member States to build mechanisms to promote and protect these rights. The United Nations today offers, to Member States who request it, assistance in the process of democratization. The Organization is also actively promoting the democratization of the international system.

On many fronts that affect all of us in our daily lives, the Organization has greatly expanded the rule of international law and the establishment of standards that immeasurably enhance global cooperation and communication and promote the well-being of our environment.

Perhaps most importantly, the United Nations has kept alive the ideal of multilateral cooperation, even during the bleakest years of the post-war period.

Today, Member States are working together more closely, on a greater range of issues, than ever before. But we are facing dangerous new challenges to our well-being: environmental degradation, economic crisis and social disarray threaten us on an unprecedented scale. More than ever, the collective resources and will that can only come from this unique institution are needed.

Facing new opportunities and new dangers, the international community must renew its commitment to global cooperation. If we are to build upon our legacy, we must show vision and perseverance equal to those of the founders of the world Organization.

The accomplishments of this unprecedented effort in international cooperation are many and they are fundamental. Underlying the daily work of the Organization, there is a foundation of painstakingly contructed international law and accepted standards that serve to guide and to support all Member States and intergovernmental organizations. These laws and standards touch us all, from the mundane details of daily life to the highest affairs of State. They are a foundation on which we build the future, a future with the common goal of a decent life for every person for generations to come.

This edition of ***Notes for Speakers*** on ***The United Nations at 50*** attempts to sketch the achievements of the United Nations over the past fifty years. It reviews the accomplishments dictated by the mandates set out in the UN Charter, namely, the promotion of peace and security, economic and social development and human rights. I hope that it captures the broad spectrum of work of the Organization and its many contributions to humanity. With this knowledge, we are better able to take up the challenges of our era with greater understanding, confidence and courage.

Boutros Boutros-Ghali
Secretary-General

UN MILESTONES 1945-1995

Inter-Allied Declaration

Signed in London on 12 June 1941 by representatives of 14 Allied nations, the Inter-Allied Declaration "to work together, with other free peoples, both in war and peace" is the first of a series of steps which led to the establishment of the United Nations.

Atlantic Charter

On 14 August 1941, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt of the United States and Prime Minister Winston Churchill of the United Kingdom propose a set of principles for international collaboration in maintaining peace and security. The document, signed during a meeting "somewhere at sea", comes to be known as the Atlantic Charter.

Declaration by United Nations

On 1 January 1942, the representatives of 26 nations fighting against the Axis Powers proclaim their support for the Atlantic Charter by signing the "Declaration by United Nations". This document marked the first official use of the term "United Nations", which was suggested by President Roosevelt.

Moscow and Teheran Conferences

In a declaration signed in Moscow on 30 October 1943, the Governments of the USSR, UK, US and China call for an early establishment of an international organization to maintain peace and security. That goal is reaffirmed at the meeting of the leaders of the US, USSR and UK at Teheran on 1 December 1943.

Dumbarton Oaks Conference

The first blueprint of the UN is prepared at a conference held at a mansion known as Dumbarton Oaks in Washington, D.C. During two phases of meetings, which ran from 21 September through 7 October 1944, the representatives of the USSR, UK, US and China agree on the aims, structure and functioning of a world organization.

Yalta Conference

On 11 February 1945, following their meetings at Yalta, in the then USSR, President Franklin D. Roosevelt, Prime Minister Winston Churchill and Premier Joseph Stalin declare their resolve to establish "a general international organization to maintain peace and security".

San Francisco Conference

On 25 April 1945, delegates of 50 nations meet in San Francisco for the conference known officially as the United Nations Conference on International Organization. The delegates draw up the 111-Article Charter, which is adopted unanimously on 25 June 1945. The next day they sign it in the auditorium of the Veterans' Memorial Hall.

24 October 1945

United Nations is created as its Charter comes into force after being ratified by the five permanent members of the Security Council and the majority of other signatories.

10 January 1946

First General Assembly, with full membership of 51 nations represented, opens in Central Hall, Westminster, London.

17 January 1946

Security Council meets for the first time in Westminster, London, adopting its rules of procedure.

24 January 1946

General Assembly adopts its first resolution. Its main focus: peaceful uses of atomic energy and the elimination of atomic and other weapons of mass destruction.

1 February 1946

Trygve Lie (Norway) becomes first Secretary-General.

June 1948

First UN observer mission established in Palestine: the UN Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO).

10 December 1948

General Assembly adopts the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

7 January 1949

A UN envoy, Dr. Ralph Bunche, secures cease-fire between the new state of Israel and Arab states.

24 October 1949

Cornerstone laid for the present UN Headquarters in New York City.

27 June 1950

Security Council, acting in the absence of the Soviet Union, recommends that Member States furnish the necessary assistance for the Republic of Korea to repel an attack by North Korean forces, and restore stability on the peninsula.

March 1953

Dag Hammarskjöld (Sweden) is elected Secretary-General.

27 July 1953

Korean Armistice Agreement is signed by the UN Command and the Chinese–North Korean Command.

6 November 1956

First Emergency Special Session of the General Assembly meets on the Suez Canal crisis, establishing the first UN peace-keeping force, the UN Emergency Force (UNEF).

September 1960

Seventeen newly independent states, 16 of them African, join the United Nations, the biggest increase in membership in any one year.

1961

First UN International Decade for Development begins.

18 September 1961

Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld dies in a plane crash while on mission to Congo.

December 1961

U Thant (Burma) is elected Secretary-General.

7 August 1963

Security Council votes voluntary arms embargo against South Africa.

4 March 1964

Security Council approves dispatch of peace-keeping force to Cyprus.

27 October 1966

General Assembly strips South Africa of its mandate to govern South-West Africa (Namibia).

16 December 1966
Mandatory sanctions are imposed against Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) by the Security Council.

16 December 1966
Adoption of the International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights and on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

23 November 1967
After the Six-Day War, the Security Council adopts resolution 242, the basis for future negotiations aimed at achieving peace in the Middle East.

12 June 1968
General Assembly approves Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and calls for ratification.

13 March 1969
Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination comes into force.

25 October 1971
General Assembly seats representatives of the People's Republic of China.

June 1972
First UN Environment Conference is held in Stockholm, leading to the establishment of the UN Environment Programme, headquartered in Nairobi.

December 1972
Kurt Waldheim (Austria) is elected Secretary-General.

13 November 1974
General Assembly recognizes the Palestine Liberation Organization as "the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people".

June-July 1975
International Women's Year is marked by first world conference on women in Mexico City.

4 November 1977
Security Council adopts mandatory arms embargo against South Africa.

May-June 1978
General Assembly convenes special session, for the first time, on disarmament.

18 December 1979
General Assembly adopts the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, covering political, economic, social, cultural and civic rights.

8 May 1980
Three years after the last case was reported, World Health Organization officially declares smallpox eradicated.

July 1980
Second world conference on women, in Copenhagen, Denmark.

25 November 1981
General Assembly adopts Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief.

December 1981
Javier Pérez de Cuéllar (Peru) is elected Secretary-General.

10 December 1982

New United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea is signed by 117 States and two entities — at that time, the largest number of signatures ever affixed to a treaty on its first day.

December 1984

Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar sets up Office for Emergency Operations in Africa to help coordinate famine relief efforts.

10 December 1984

General Assembly adopts the Convention Against Torture.

July 1985

Thousands meet in Nairobi for closing conference on UN Decade for Women.

September 1987

Efforts of the UN Environment Programme lead to the signing of a Treaty on the Protection of the Ozone Layer, known as the Montreal Protocol, the first global environment protection agreement.

20 August 1988

Iran/Iraq cease-fire comes into effect.

April 1989

UN Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) is deployed throughout Namibia to monitor South Africa's withdrawal and provide electoral assistance. Namibia becomes an independent country in August 1989, four months later.

2 September 1990

Convention on the Rights of the Child comes into force.

30 September 1990

As a result of efforts by UNICEF, a World Summit for Children is held at UN Headquarters, with 71 heads of State and Government, and adopts Plan of Action.

31 May 1991

A cease-fire in the 16-year civil war in Angola is negotiated, then administered by the UN Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM).

31 December 1991

Agreement signed between the Government of El Salvador and FMLN (national liberation front) at UN Headquarters, through the good offices of the Secretary-General, leads to a cease-fire and peace accord after a 10-year war.

December 1991

Boutros Boutros-Ghali (Egypt) becomes the sixth UN Secretary-General.

31 January 1992

Security Council holds its first-ever meeting at the level of heads of State and Government.

June 1992

The UN Conference on Environment and Development, the "Earth Summit", is held in Rio de Janeiro; attended by 104 heads of State and Government and other leaders, the largest intergovernmental gathering in history, resulting in Agenda 21, a plan of action for sustainable development.

17 June 1992

Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali issues *An Agenda for Peace* on preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, peace-keeping and peace-building.

1992

The United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM) is established.

1992

The United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) is established.

May 1993

The United Nations Observer Mission to Verify the Referendum in Eritrea (UNOVER) contributes to the declaration of Eritrean independence and the country's admission to the United Nations.

UN-supervised elections in Cambodia lead to the drafting of a new constitution and the establishment of the new Government, ending nearly 15 years of strife in the war-torn country.

June 1993

World Conference on Human Rights is held in Vienna, during the International Year of the World's Indigenous People.

6 May 1994

In response to the request of the General Assembly, the Secretary-General produces *An Agenda for Development*, a blueprint for improving the human condition.

12 September 1994

The United Nations International Conference on Population and Development, in Cairo, adopts a landmark Programme of Action.

March 1995

At the largest meeting of world leaders to date, 117 heads of State and Government gather in Copenhagen for the World Summit for Social Development.

September 1995

Fourth World Conference on Women scheduled to meet in Beijing.

26 October 1995

Special Session of the General Assembly to reaffirm commitment to the UN Charter.

Introduction

> *The United Nations, to me, does not represent a vague ideal of universal peace and brotherhood which has its appeal only to starry-eyed idealists and moralists. Far from it. It is hard-headed, enlightened self-interest, the stake that all humanity has in peace and progress and, most important of all, survival, that dictates the need for the United Nations as a practical, institutional embodiment of the needs of nations on a shrinking planet, as a potent and dynamic instrument at the service of all nations, east and west, north as well as south.*
>
> —U Thant, Secretary-General of the United Nations (1961 - 1972) [1]

Even before the end of World War II, intensive consultations among "post-war planners" and top advisers of allied leaders produced a blueprint for the post-war world and the institutions that were to "save succeeding generations from the scourge of war".

The United Nations system was the central mechanism of this post-war vision: the United Nations itself, the International Court of Justice, the specialized agencies, and the Bretton Woods institutions, including the International Monetary Fund and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (the World Bank). These institutions would work in harmony and cooperation with international and regional organizations to ensure a world of peace, development and respect for human rights.

Throughout 50 years of tumultuous change, the United Nations has remained the world's principal mechanism for international peace and security and for mobilizing international efforts to deal with global economic, social and environmental problems. Constantly struggling to fulfil the hopes and dreams of its founders, it has contributed enormously to global stability, cooperation and understanding.

Amidst crises and a never-ending stream of new challenges, the UN has evolved into an indispensable, multifaceted tool upon which 185 Member States and billions of people rely to handle issues that require international cooperation. Recent breakthroughs — such as the agreements reached at world conferences on environment, population and social development and the extension of the treaty on non-proliferation of nuclear weapons — highlight the new vitality and effectiveness of the Organization. Despite setbacks, the history of the United Nations reveals a long list of accomplishments. Some of its achievements are so basic — such as the enormous impact of health and family-planning and education programmes or standard setting in scores of areas critical to our well-being — that they tend to be taken for granted.

Evolution as Peace-keeper

No sooner had the United Nations been established than it became deeply involved in keeping the peace, beginning with the question of Palestine, followed later by the confrontation in Korea, the Suez Canal crisis, the crisis in the Congo and conflicts related to the decolonization struggles. Its work was greatly complicated by the escalation of the cold war. Between 1967 and 1987, the UN had to respond to conflicts between Israel and its Arab neighbours, fighting between India and Pakistan, between Iraq and Iran, and civil wars in Afghanistan and El Salvador.

In the post–cold war period, new and more complex conflicts, primarily within nations and often accompanied by serious humanitarian dimensions, have stretched the peace-keeping capability of the United Nations to the limits. The traditional United Nations role of peace-keeping has broadened, with emphasis on peacemaking and peace-building to sustain peace and promote long-term development. In 1988, a total of seven missions were under way, while in 1994, the United Nations had deployed a record number of 17 peace-keeping operations involving some 70,000 troops worldwide.

The United Nations has also vigorously pursued the goal of disarmament in order to remove the threat of a nuclear war, to halt and reduce the proliferation of nuclear weapons, to prohibit nuclear testing in the atmosphere and underground, to control and prohibit the use of biological and chemical weapons and toxins and other weapons of mass destruction, and to control the use of particularly injurious conventional weapons.

Several international treaties have been enacted and global campaigns to sensitize world opinion to the urgency of disarmament have helped to create a climate of peace at the global level. The end of the cold war has enhanced prospects for cooperation for peace and economic development by giving new momentum to disarmament agreements and generating peace dividends that can be reallocated towards development efforts.

> *In many ways, the United Nations has outreached the vision of San Francisco [where the UN Charter was signed in 1945]. The speed, comprehensiveness and relative lack of violence accompanying decolonization, which has fundamentally changed the world and the United Nations, certainly owes much to our Organization. The present range of activity of the Organization, encompassing great economic and social aims such as a new international economic order, humanitarian programmes, human rights and global problems of universal concern, is also far wider and more comprehensive than anything envisaged at San Francisco.*
>
> — Kurt Waldheim, Secretary-General of the United Nations (1972 - 1981)[2]

Over the past 50 years, the decolonization process has been virtually completed. The United Nations directed vast energies to overseeing the liberation of more than 60 countries representing some 750 million people who, at the time of the Organization's creation, lived in Trust and Non-Self-Governing Territories (NSGTs). For more than four decades, the United Nations also waged a protracted struggle to eradicate apartheid and ultimately succeeded in helping to bring about a free, democratic and non-racial South Africa. Its struggle against racism in all its forms continues to be an important aspect of the Organization's work. (*See International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, page 59.*)

Concomitant with its pursuit of international peace and security, the United Nations has sought to fulfil the other grand design of its Charter: "To achieve international cooperation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character, and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms". It has made significant progress in these areas through its several organs and agencies that assist nations to meet these challenges. Relief has been provided to millions of displaced or suffering people around the world as a result of conflicts, natural disasters and other emergencies. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) alone has helped 33 million refugees. Nevertheless, a complex and protracted refugee crisis involving 26 million people worldwide, as well as tens of millions of internally displaced persons, continues to challenge the international community to respond to greater responsibilities. The creation of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs in 1992 is one indication of the Organization's ongoing commitment to resolving these problems.

In the sphere of economic development, the United Nations has focused its programmes in particular on the requirements of developing countries. It created the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to be an instrument for identifying needs and channelling assistance to these countries. Through the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the United Nations has contributed to the successful conclusion of the Uruguay Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations in 1994, the most comprehensive package ever of trade liberalization measures.

In carrying out the mandate of the Charter, the social agenda of the United Nations has been redefined and expanded in response to the profound changes and challenges on several major fronts: to deal with human settlements, population and development issues; to address environmental problems and sustainable development; and to promote human rights and equal protection, particularly for women and children. Efforts to chart a more aggressive global drive for new sources of financial assistance and commitment for social progress and development were given new impetus by 117 world leaders at the 1995 World Summit for Social Development.

After the cold war

With the end of the cold war, the international community, freed of the ideological and other constraints of the East-West struggle, saw new opportunities to respond more effectively to longstanding problems that had defied resolution because of super-power rivalries. As a result energies turned to the revitalization and redefinition of the work and structure of the Organization. There was optimistic talk of the "peace dividend", and the UN Security Council acted with unprecedented consensus and momentum on many issues.

At the same time, the thawing of the cold war triggered long-suppressed tensions and conflicts in many parts of the world. Serious global economic and social problems ranging from poverty, overpopulation, refugees and migration to unemployment, drug-trafficking and environmental decline have affected many societies on an unprecedented scale.

Despite the dramatically diminished nuclear threat, the world of the 1990s turns out to be a far more unstable place than many had hoped. The reality of global interdependence, while promising new opportunities for cooperation and exchange, reminds us all too often of our shared and persistent problems. We face more tension in more places; increasing degradation of the quality of human life; ever more complex issues of international law and ethics, management and practical cooperation. As a result, the United Nations system is in greater demand than ever before. And it is also clear that the United Nations is uniquely prepared to address our problems and to face the challenges of an ever more complex world.

United Nations in transition

> *The United Nations is the only institution capable of comprehensively addressing global problems in all their political, humanitarian and socio-economic dimensions. In the new climate of international relations, we must not miss the opportunity to develop the necessary consensus and the necessary policy instruments to do this job.*
>
> — Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali addressing the Conference on Global Development Cooperation, Carter Center, Atlanta, Georgia, 1992 [3]

A major concern of the Secretary-General and of Member States is to ensure that the policies governing the work of the Organization, and its structures and methods of work — those of its intergovernmental organs (the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council), and those of the Secretariat — undergo the necessary reforms to enable the United Nations to meet effectively the challenges posed by the new international context.

Through **An Agenda for Peace** (*see page 17*) and **An Agenda for Development** (*see page 42*), the Secretary-General has introduced new approaches to the role of the Organization in support of peace and security on the one hand, and economic and social development on the other, highlighting linkages between these two inseparable aspects of the mission of the Organization.

Both the Security Council and the General Assembly have actively pursued discussions on the policy proposals and recommendations for reform outlined in **An Agenda for Peace**.

The General Assembly is also giving special attention to developing a new consensus on a comprehensive agenda for development, in the light of the Secretary-General's proposals, to give renewed direction to the work of the system. It has also initiated new processes to address the difficult financial situation of the Organization, and consider possible reforms of the system of assessment of Member States.

With the endorsement of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council has substantially reorganized its work. It has initiated ministerial-level annual meetings — the so-called High-Level segment — to address priority economic and social issues, such as African economic recovery. It has also begun to play a more incisive role in ensuing greater coherence in the policies and programmes of the operational arms of the Organization — UNDP, UNICEF, and the joint UN/FAO World Food Programme (WFP) — whose governing bodies have been restructured into smaller executive boards. Its coordinating role in relation to the activities of the specialized agencies, including the Bretton Woods institutions, is also being strengthened, with the active participation in its work of the heads of these organizations.

The Administrative Committee on Coordination — which brings together the executive heads of the specialized agencies and UN programmes under the chairmanship of the Secretary-General — has also taken measures to reinforce its capacity to ensure that the policies and programmes which the executives of the various organizations propose to their legislative and governing bodies are mutually reinforcing, and to promote inter-agency cooperation and avoid duplication in the execution of programmes. As part of this effort, the Committee has introduced recently a substantial streamlining of the inter-agency committees which prepare its policy and managerial decisions.

The Secretary-General has also initiated and implemented a major restructuring of the Secretariat of the United Nations itself, based on a comprehensive review of functions and of new requirements. This has involved a significant reduction in the number of separate Offices and Departments (and, therefore, of established high-level posts), and has led to a more rational and effective distribution of activities within the Organization, including relocations of programmes between UN centres in New York, Geneva, Vienna and Rome. The resulting economies of scale have made it possible to meet new demands and reinforce capacities in areas of emerging priority without budgetary growth.

Under the new structures, a single Department, **the Department of Peace-keeping Operations**, has responsibility for all aspects of peace-keeping operations, and another, the **Department of Political Affairs**, is responsible for policy coordination in the exercise of Secretariat functions for peace-making, peace-building and conflict prevention, and for the servicing of the Security Council and the General Assembly.

Coordination of all emergency and disaster relief activities, such as those carried out by UNHCR, WFP and UNICEF, is supported by a single **Department of Humanitarian Affairs**. The capacity of the Organization for the promotion of human rights, through the Centre for Human Rights in Geneva, has also been reinforced by the establishment by the General Assembly of the new post of **High Commissioner for Human Rights.**

Similarly, in the economic and social sectors, a single Department, the **Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development**, has responsibility, under the new structures, for policy coordination and development, including the servicing of ECOSOC and the Second and Third Committees of the General Assembly, and for the preparation and follow-up of global conferences and summits which seek to advance the objective of sustainable development pioneered by the Rio Conference. The **Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis** has consolidated all activities for the collection and analysis of economic, social and demographic statistics and is responsible for the *World Economic and Social Survey*. Finally, the **Department for Development Support and Management Services** focuses on the provision of assistance for capacity-building in developing countries, particularly institution-building and human resource development. Other technical cooperation activities previously undertaken from Headquarters have been decentralized to the Regional Commissions. (*See page 7, the United Nations Organization*.)

Recently, the Administrator of UNDP has been designated to assist the Secretary-General in ensuring coordination of development activities within the Organization. The Administrator of UNDP has also been entrusted with overall responsibility for supporting the Secretary-General in coordinating the development programmes carried out by the UN system at the country level.

The major cycle of world conferences and summits held during the first half of the decade — encompassing the World Summit for Children, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the World Conference on Human Rights, the International Conference on Population and Development, and the World Summit for Social Development — will soon be completed with the holding of the Fourth World Conference on Women and Habitat II. These events, which involve an intensive process of critical assessment at the national, regional and international levels, are resulting in action plans which, together, should set the agenda for the work of the international community into the next century. The active participation of non-governmental actors in these events also sets the stage for further advances in another key area of reform: achieving a wider and more systematic involvement of civil society in all aspects of the activities of the United Nations.

These developments have been accompanied by important reforms in administrative and managerial practices, aimed at enhancing staff responsibility and accountability. These involve more effective and transparent recruitment procedures, improved arrangements for the appraisal of staff performance and for staff training, rigorous financial controls, and a strengthened system of audits and inspections through the new **Office of Internal Oversight Services,** established by the General Assembly.

NOTES

1. Excerpt from "East-West Relations and the United Nations", address delivered at Johns Hopkins University on December 2, 1962, in *Towards World Peace*, Addresses and Public Statements 1957-1963 by U Thant, selected by Jacob Baal-Teshuva, p. 128.
2. From: "Text of Message by Secretary-General for Charter Day, 26 June", DPI press release SG/SM/2938, 25 June 1980.
3. *Conference on Global Development Cooperation*, DPI press release SG/SM/4872, 4 December 1992.

THE UNITED NATIONS ORGANIZATION

> *As a world organization the United Nations must, for a long time to come, be an organization of clearly limited powers. It cannot be a world government. How, otherwise, could nations as different in their history and government as the United States and the Soviet Union both be included? How, otherwise, could the old nationalisms of Europe and the rising new nationalisms of Asia and Africa be contained within the same peaceful framework? How, otherwise, could peoples owing allegiance to different religions and different cultures, sometimes for thousands of years, be brought together on common ground?*
>
> —Trygve Lie, Secretary-General of the United Nations (1946 - 1953) [1]

The United Nations remains an organization of sovereign nations — not a world government. It provides the machinery for its Member States to help find solutions to disputes or problems, and to deal with matters of concern to all humanity.

It does not legislate like a national parliament. But in the meeting rooms and corridors of the UN, representatives of almost all countries of the world — large and small, rich and poor, with varying political views and social systems — have a voice and vote in shaping the policies of the international community.

The General Assembly

The *General Assembly* is the UN's main deliberative body. All Member States are represented in it, and each has one vote.

The Assembly has the right to discuss and make recommendations on all matters within the scope of the UN Charter. It has no power to compel action by any Government, but its recommendations carry the weight of world opinion. The Assembly also sets policies and determines programmes for the UN Secretariat. It sets goals and directs activities for development, approves the budget of peace-keeping operations and calls for world conferences on major issues. Occupying a central position in the UN, the Assembly considers reports from other organs, admits new Members, approves the UN budget and appoints the UN Secretary-General upon the recommendation of the Security Council.

Because of the great number of questions that the Assembly debates at each session (162 separate agenda items were addressed at the 1994 Assembly, for example), the Assembly allocates most questions to its six main committees.

The Security Council

The *Security Council* is the organ to which the Charter gives primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. It can be convened at any time, whenever peace is threatened and may deploy peace-keepers to prevent the outbreak of conflict. Member States may bring any dispute before the Security Council and are obligated to carry out its decisions.

The Council has 15 members. Five of these — China, France, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States — are permanent members possessing the right to veto any

Council decision. The other 10 are elected by the Assembly for two-year terms. Decisions require nine votes; except in votes on procedural questions, a decision cannot be taken if there is a negative vote by a permanent member.

When a threat to international peace is brought before the Council, it usually first asks the parties to reach agreement by peaceful means. The Council may undertake mediation or set forth principles for a settlement. It may request the Secretary-General to investigate and report on a situation. If fighting breaks out, the Council tries to secure a cease-fire. It may, with the consent of the parties involved, send peace-keeping missions to troubled areas to reduce tension and keep opposing forces apart. It has the power to enforce its decisions by imposing economic sanctions and by ordering collective military action.

The Council also makes recommendations to the Assembly on a candidate for Secretary-General and on the admission of new Members to the UN.

The Economic and Social Council

The *Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)*, with 54 member States, coordinates the economic and social work of the United Nations system. It oversees nine functional commissions, five regional commissions and five standing committees, as well as relations with NGOs. (*See page 34.*)

The Secretariat

The *Secretariat* services the other organs of the UN, with the exception of the ICJ, and administers their programmes. Made up of a staff working at Headquarters and other offices, including 67 information centres around the world, it carries out the day-to-day work of the UN, ranging from administering peace-keeping operations to organizing conferences, preparing surveys and studies and providing information on the Organization. At its head is the Secretary-General. Staff members, numbering more than 14,000 worldwide, are international civil servants, currently drawn from over 170 countries.

The Secretary-General

The *Secretary-General* has responsibilities in addition to the control and direction of the Secretariat. The Charter provides that he shall act in his capacity as chief administrative officer of the Organization at all meetings of the General Assembly, Security Council, Economic and Social Council and Trusteeship Council, and shall perform such other functions as are entrusted to him by these organs. He is empowered to bring to the attention of the Security Council any matter which, in his opinion, may threaten the maintenance of international peace and security. [2] He may use his "good offices" in the interest of preventive diplomacy (*see UN Milestones on page ix*).

Specialized agencies and programmes

The growth of the United Nations system can be measured in its evolving need for specialized agencies and other intergovernmental bodies to carry out new programmes.

The specialized agencies are separate, autonomous organizations related to the UN by special intergovernmental agreements, "having wide international responsibilities in economic, social, cultural, educational, health, and related fields" and which have been "brought into relationship with the United Nations" (article 57 of the UN Charter). They have their own membership, legislative and executive bodies, secretariats and budgets, but they work with the United Nations and with each other through, among other things, the coordinating machinery of the Economic and Social Council.

Some of the agencies were the successors to similar organizations associated with the former

League of Nations; some have earlier origins. The original core of specialized agencies includes the International Labour Organization (ILO); the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO); the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); the World Health Organization (WHO); the World Bank; the International Monetary Fund (IMF); the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO); the Universal Postal Union (UPU); and the International Telecommunications Union (ITU).

Those added later include the World Meteorological Organization (WMO); the International Maritime Organization (IMO); the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO); the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD); and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO). Although not a specialized agency, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is an autonomous intergovernmental organization under the aegis of the UN.

Some of these agencies, such as the ILO, predate the founding of the United Nations; others were added later, such as UNIDO, formerly a United Nations programme created in the mid-1960s, which became a full specialized agency in 1985. Some technical agencies with a very specific focus, like ITU and UPU, were established more than a century ago; WIPO also had its origins in nineteenth-century bureaux, but was established in its present form in 1974.

Yet other programmes were established to meet new areas of concern, which included economic, social and humanitarian issues. The first programmes were humanitarian and dealt with: children — the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF); Palestine refugees — the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA); and refugees in general — the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

In the early 1960s the number of independent countries grew considerably as a result of decolonization. The newly independent countries looked to the UN for technical assistance, and consequently, operational activities for development increased. As concern for economic and social activities related to the developing countries began to gain increasing importance on the international agenda from the mid-1960s, other special programmes were formed relating to trade and development — the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD); trade promotion — the International Trade Centre (ITC); financing of technical cooperation — the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); industrial development (UNIDO) — which, as indicated above, became a specialized agency in 1985; food assistance — the World Food Programme (WFP); population — the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA); research and training — the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR); and disaster relief — the United Nations Disaster Relief Organization (UNDRO), the activities of which were transferred to the Department of Humanitarian Affairs in 1992; the Emergency Relief Coordinator is the Under-Secretary-General of the Department.

As a result of international conferences, beginning in the 1970s, new programmes were adopted which, in some cases, led to the creation of new organizational entities, such as the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP); the World Food Council (WFC); the UN Centre on Transnational Corporations (UNCTC) — now mainly incorporated under UNCTAD; the United Nations University (UNU); the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM); the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW); the Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat); and the UN Centre for Science and Technology for Development (UNCSTD). Within the framework of the restructuring of the UN, a major part of UNCSTD's activities were transferred to the Division for Sustainable Development, within the United Nations Secretariat. The most recent programme was established in 1990: the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP).

This rapid expansion at the global level, in the 60s and 70s, was accompanied by an equally impressive growth of regional activities, a trend which has continued. The five regional commissions — the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA); the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE); the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC); the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP); and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) — have assumed an increasingly important role in fostering cooperation, with broad responsibility for economic and social development at the regional level.

The International Court of Justice

Also known as the World Court, the International Court of Justice (ICJ), seated at The Hague, Netherlands, is the principal judicial organ of the UN available to all Member States. Its 15 judges are elected by the General Assembly and the Security Council. Only countries may be parties in cases brought before the Court. If a country does not wish to take part in a proceeding it does not have to do so (unless required by special treaty provisions), but if it accepts, it is obligated to comply with the Court's decision. The General Assembly and the Security Council and other organs of the UN can ask the Court for advisory opinions on legal questions.

The Trusteeship Council

This UN organ, made up of the five permanent members of the Security Council, was established to ensure that Governments responsible for administering Trust Territories take adequate steps to prepare them for self-government or independence. In 1994, the Security Council terminated the UN Trusteeship Agreement for the last of the original 11 Trusteeships — the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (Palau), administered by the United States. The task of the Trusteeship System was thus completed, with all Trust Territories attaining self-government or independence, either as separate States or by joining neighbouring independent countries. The Trusteeship Council, by amending its rules of procedure, will now meet as and where occasion may require.

NOTES

1. "The United Nations: Our Only Road to Peace", address by Trygve Lie, Secretary-General of the United Nations, 9 May, 1948, UN Department of Public Information, UNST/DPI(02)/L42, United Nations Dag Hammarskjöld Library.
2. *Guide to the Charter of the United Nations*, 1958, p. 36, UN Department of Public Information, UNST/DPI(02)/G81, United Nations Dag Hammarskjöld Library.

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PEACE AND SECURITY

> ***It has been a stable theme at the United Nations that an obsession with military security results in a self-perpetuating arms race, distorts priorities, hampers social and economic progress, constrains political dialogue, affects the institutions of the State to their long-term detriment, and aggravates the sense of insecurity in all nations. What often sounded a voice in the wilderness has now gained a volume and resonance it lacked before.***
>
> —Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, Secretary-General of the United Nations (1982 - 1991) [1]

In January 1992, the Security Council held an unprecedented meeting at the level of heads of State and Government. This meeting was a striking reaffirmation of the role of the United Nations in maintaining peace and security, and the recognition that the ending of the cold war did not mean the end of threats to peace. At the same time, the Council welcomes the rapidly increasing peace-keeping tasks it was overseeing, including election monitoring, human rights, disarmament verification and the repatriation of refugees.

The Council also called on the Secretary-General to recommend ways to improve the UN's capacity to meet the escalating challenges in the areas of preventive diplomacy, peace building, peacemaking, and peace-keeping. In response, the Secretary-General released a far-reaching report later that year entitled ***An Agenda for Peace***, that has served as a policy benchmark in the tumultuous period that continues today. (*See notes on* ***An Agenda for Peace*** *on page 17.*)

The heightened role of the Security Council in the post-cold-war period is reflected in a high level of difficult peace-keeping and peacemaking initiatives. These missions have a close relationship with the overall mandates of the UN Organization and the advancement of economic and social development in particular. As Prime Minister John Major of the United Kingdom, speaking as president of the 1992 Security Council summit meeting, put it: "The absence of war and military conflicts amongst States does not in itself ensure international peace and security. The non-military sources of instability in the economic, social, humanitarian and ecological fields have become threats to peace and security. The United Nations membership as a whole, working through the appropriate bodies, needs to give the highest priority to the solution of these matters." [2]

The United Nations was established in the aftermath of a devastating war to help stabilize international relations and give peace a more secure foundation. Peace and security are, of course, the ultimate goals of all the UN's activities. However, its direct involvement is clearest in its peace initiatives through the Security Council, its humanitarian assistance initiatives, its involvement in the multifaceted process of disarmament and, earlier, in the process of decolonization. Given the immediacy and danger of conflicts, both nuclear and conventional, peace-keeping has always been an overriding concern of the United Nations and its most visible activity to the world public. As a result, the activities of blue-helmeted UN peace-keepers have become virtually synonymous with the Organization.

- By deploying more than 35 peace-keeping forces and observer missions since 1948, the United Nations has been able to intervene in conflicts to monitor cessation-of-hostilities agreements, provide humanitarian assistance and encourage peace negotiations. These interventions have saved many civilians from becoming casualties of conflicts.
- Between 1988 and 1995, 24 new peace-keeping operations were mounted, compared with 13 such operations over the previous 40 years.
- The United Nations annual budget for peace-keeping rose from $230 million in 1988 to $3.6 billion for the twelve months ending 30 March 1995.
- As at 30 May 1995 there were 16 peace-keeping operations around the world. In early 1995, about 69,000 UN troops, military observers and civilian police, provided by 77 countries, were deployed in various areas of the world.
- More than 720,000 military personnel and thousands of civilians have served with the UN forces since 1948, and nearly 1,200 peace-keepers have lost their lives while on mission. [3]

The deaths of peace-keepers are reminders of the risks involved and the personal sacrifices made in support of UN peacemaking efforts. In its decision to confer the 1988 Nobel Peace Prize on United Nations peace-keeping forces, the Nobel Committee cited in particular the "young people of many nations ... who, in keeping with their ideals, voluntarily take on a demanding and hazardous service in the cause of peace".

- Since 1945, the United Nations has been credited with helping to negotiate many peace settlements that have ended regional conflicts. Recent cases include an end to the Iran-Iraq war (1988), the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan (1989), and an end to the civil war in El Salvador (1992).
- In efforts to promote democracy and recovery from prolonged conflicts, the United Nations has helped to organize free and fair elections in over 45 countries, providing electoral advice, assistance and monitoring of results. Recent elections in which the UN has played an important role include, in chronological order, Namibia, Nicaragua, Haiti, Angola, Eritrea, Cambodia, El Salvador, South Africa and Mozambique.
- In most cases, the legitimacy of these elections has been recognized by the people, resulting in Governments that are mandated to restore stability and enabling the United Nations to continue with longer-term development assistance programmes.

The cold war dominated the first four-and-a-half decades of the United Nations, in some ways limiting its peace-keeping capabilities. Today, during the UN's 50th anniversary year, the UN's peace efforts have multiplied and its work has become more costly, more complex and more dangerous. The conflicts it has addressed tend to share distinctive characteristics.

- Most of today's conflicts take place within States, not among them.
- They are fought not always by armies, but often by irregular forces.
- Civilians are the main victims and, as a result, humanitarian emergencies are often the focus of UN efforts.
- Sometimes, the State institutions in the countries involved have collapsed and the parties to a conflict represent little beyond their own interests.
- The demand for United Nations involvement, the number of personnel, the budgets involved, all are of a vastly greater magnitudetoday than before.

In order to be successful, these dangerous and complex missions require the constant support and attention of the international community and the determined political will of those opposing forces involved.

PEACE-KEEPING HIGHLIGHTS

UN peacemaking and peace-keeping efforts began with the entering into force of the UN Charter in October 1945 and the opening of the first session of the General Assembly in January 1946. They have continued on all fronts ever since, with some notably positive results.

The first peace-keeping operation was the **United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO)** in the Middle East, set up in 1948 to supervise the truce called for by the Security Council. In 1949, its military observers remained to supervise the Armistice Agreements between Israel and its Arab neighbours, which were the basis of the uneasy truce in the whole area. UNTSO is still in operation. A unique feature of UNTSO is that its activities are spread over territory within five States, and it maintains relations with five host countries (Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria). It maintains its headquarters in Jerusalem.

Other UN operations include:

- The United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan, in operation from 1949 to date;
- The United Nations Emergency Force, in operation on the Egypt-Israel border from 1956 to 1967;
- The United Nations Operation in the Congo, deployed in the Republic of the Congo (now Zaire) from 1960 to 1964;
- The United Nations Security Force in West New Guinea (West Irian), in operation from 1962 to 1963;
- The United Nations Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus, set up in 1964;
- The Second United Nations Emergency Force between Egypt and Israel which functioned from 1973 to 1979;
- The United Nations Disengagement Observer Force, established in the Syrian Golan Heights in 1974;
- The United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, established in 1978;
- The United Nations Transition Assistance Group, deployed in Namibia from 1989 to 1990;

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SOME DEFINITIONS

Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld once referred to peace-keeping, which is not specifically in the Charter, as belonging to a hypothetical "chapter six and a half" of the Charter, somewhere between the methods for bringing about peaceful settlement of disputes outlined in Chapter VI and the enforcement action envisaged in Chapter VII. But peace-keeping also reflects one of the first purposes of the UN announced in the Preamble to the Charter: the establishment of "conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained".

As defined in ***An Agenda for Peace***,[1] the following terms are commonly used to describe the different efforts authorized by the Security Council to maintain and restore peace and security:

- **Preventive diplomacy** is action to prevent disputes from arising between parties, to prevent existing disputes from escalating into conflicts and to limit the spread of the latter when they occur.
- **Peacemaking** means negotiation. Peacemaking seeks to bring hostile parties to agreement, such as in the almost eight years of complex negotiations that reached an agreement between Afghanistan and Pakistan (*see page 19.*) It uses peaceful means, under Chapter VI of the Charter of the United Nations, "Pacific Settlement of Disputes".
- **Peace-keeping** is the deployment of a United Nations presence in the field, hitherto with the consent of all the parties concerned, normally involving United Nations military and/or police personnel, and frequently civilians as well. Peace-keeping is a technique that expands the possibilities for both the prevention of conflict and the making of peace. It has generally been used to maintain a cease-fire. Peace-keeping is not specifically provided for in the UN Charter.
- **Peace enforcement** may be needed when peaceful means fail. It may involve coercion and risk. It is provided for in Chapter VII of the Charter, "Action with Respect to Threats to the Peace, Breaches of the Peace, and Acts of Aggression."
- **Peace-building** is critical in the aftermath of conflict. It means "action to identify and support structures which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict", structures that build trust and interaction among former enemies. A growing awareness has arisen of its role in supporting preventive diplomacy.
- **Good offices** refers to steps taken directly by the Secretary-General or his senior staff, publicly or in private, to prevent international disputes from arising, escalating or spreading. Indeed, as events and crises unfold across the globe, the Secretary-General's words and deeds can have profound impact.
- **Sanctions** are measures not involving the use of armed force to maintain or restore international peace and security. Such measures, cited under Article 41 of the United Nations Charter, are usually of an economic nature.

NOTE

1. *An Agenda for Peace*, 1992, p. 11.

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- The United Nations Advance Mission in Cambodia, in operation from 1991 to 1992, was replaced by the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia, which completed its mandate in 1993;
- Two United Nations Operations in Somalia, in operation between 1992 and 1995;
- The United Nations Protection Force, set up in the former Yugoslavia in 1992, continues to facilitate the delivery of international humanitarian assistance throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina;
- The United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda, set up in 1993 and still in operation in 1995;

Recent peace-keeping successes

Namibia — The independence of Namibia, formerly South-West Africa, on 21 March 1990 was the culmination of a determined United Nations effort that began in 1946. The **UN Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG)**, launched in March 1989 to oversee Namibia's transition to independence from South Africa under free and fair elections supervised by the UN, deployed a combination of military, police and civilian personnel.

The transition group's military units monitored the cease-fire in the Territory as well as the withdrawal, restriction to base, and demobilization of armed forces. The group's civilian police prevented intimidation of the people or interference with the electoral process and helped to ensure the good conduct of the Territory's police forces. Non-police civilian personnel assisted the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in supervising and controlling all aspects of the operation, including the proper electoral process.

The Republic of Namibia acceded to independence in 1990, following the complex operation managed by the United Nations. At its peak, nearly 8,600 people of 124 nationalities, including some, 4,500 military personnel, participated. On 23 April 1990, Namibia became the United Nations 160th Member, putting an end to years of debilitating military conflict and setting the stage for accelerated development efforts.

El Salvador — From 1990, the Secretary-General assisted in talks between the Government of El Salvador and the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) aimed at ending the 12-year conflict. The Secretary-General's mediation led to the 1992 peace agreement, which ended the conflict and opened the way to national reconciliation. The **UN Observer Mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL)** monitored all agreements concluded between the Government and FMLN, and observed the 1994 elections. The observer mission also monitored human rights and investigated alleged violations, becoming the first UN peace-keeping mission to place special emphasis on this issue. ONUSAL completed its mission successfully in April 1995.

Cambodia — United Nations involvement in Cambodia began in 1979, when the General Assembly called for the withdrawal of all foreign forces, non-interference by other States in

Cambodia's internal affairs, and self-determination of the Cambodian people. In the 1980s, the Secretary-General used his good offices with the Governments and parties concerned to assist in Cambodia's national reconciliation.

After a visit to the region in 1985, the Secretary-General listed a series of objectives on which there was agreement among the parties, thus detailing for the first time the main elements of a comprehensive settlement. Momentum was thus given to the peace talks, and with the end of the cold war and following Viet Nam's 1989 withdrawal of its troops from Cambodia, an international conference aimed at securing peace was convened in Paris, concluding, in October 1991, with the signing of a comprehensive agreement. Responsibility for executing the Paris Agreements was entrusted to the United Nations, first through the **UN Advance Mission in Cambodia (UNAMIC)**, which oversaw the beginning of the cease-fire from November 1991, and then through the **UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC)**, which began operation in March 1992.

Under the Paris Agreements, UNTAC was entrusted with organizing and executing free and fair elections, coordinating the refugee repatriation programme, coordinating economic support for reconstruction, monitoring and supervising the withdrawal of foreign forces, the cease-fire and the demobilization of the majority of the armed forces of all factions, and fostering an environment conducive to the enjoyment of human rights. At its peak, UNTAC comprised over 21,000 military and civilian personnel from more than 100 countries.

Despite the refusal by the Party of Democratic Kampuchea (the Khmer Rouge) to cooperate with UNTAC, the May 1993 elections, in which nearly 90 per cent of the registered electorate voted, were carried out without incident and were deemed fair. In September 1993, a new constitution providing for a parliamentary monarchy was promulgated as the newly elected legislature and executive took power.

While UNTAC was the largest and most visible aspect of the UN role in Cambodia's reconstruction and rehabilitation, UN involvement did not stop with UNTAC's withdrawal in late 1993. The UN has continued to be extensively involved in Cambodia's peace-building.

At the request of the Cambodian Government, the Security Council in November 1993 established a team of 20 military liaison officers for a six-month period to maintain liaison with the Government and to deal with residual military matters pertaining to the Paris Agreements. After the termination of their mandate, in conjunction with the Government, the Secretary-General in April 1994 appointed a Representative for Cambodia. His task is to maintain close liaison and dialogue with the host Government, monitor the political situation and report on developments relating to peace and security, and coordinate the UN presence in Cambodia.

The UN Development Programme and other UN agencies are providing assistance in the reconstruction and rehabilitation of the country. In the area of human rights, the UN contribution has taken the form of education, technical advice and assistance to the Government in promoting and protecting human rights. These tasks are performed primarily through the field office of the Centre for Human Rights and through the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Human Rights.

Mozambique — After a few years of relative peace following its independence from Portugal in 1975, Mozambique was plunged into a devastating civil war waged against the country's

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AN AGENDA FOR PEACE

In June 1992, at the request of the Security Council, the Secretary-General issued ***An Agenda for Peace***, a report presenting proposals for more effective United Nations activities to identify potential conflicts, bring about their short- and long-term resolution and build peace among former adversaries during the post-conflict period.

In January 1995, the Secretary-General issued a supplement to his ***Agenda for Peace*** of 1992, citing the need "to highlight selectively certain areas where unforeseen, or only partly foreseen, difficulties" had arisen as a result of the experience gained since 1992. These "difficulties" have led to new kinds of United Nations operations to deal with the outbreak of ethnic and religious wars within newly independent States and the dramatic changes in both the quantity and nature of United Nations activities in peace and security.

The two documents together comprise one of the most comprehensive position papers in the 50-year history of the United Nations addressing the highly complex role of the United Nations in its efforts to help bring peace to the world.

With regard to **preventive diplomacy**, the Secretary-General recommended:

- Increased use of confidence-building and fact-finding activities;
- The establishment of an early-warning system for assessing possible threats to peace;
- A new technique — **"preventive deployment"** — by which UN forces would be sent to an area to deter hostilities, rather than waiting until armed conflict occurred;
- Provision of about $25 million in the budget for small field missions for preventive diplomacy and peacemaking;
- Consideration of demilitarized zones as a preventive option;
- That the Security Council seek information on economic and social situations, such as massive migration, famine, and ethnic unrest, which might pose a threat to international peace and security.

To ensure a more active **peacemaking** role for the United Nations, the Secretary-General:

- Called for the full participation of the General Assembly in supporting efforts at mediation, negotiation, or arbitration;
- Urged States to place greater reliance on the International Court of Justice for the peaceful settlement of their differences;
- Called for new steps to enable the United Nations to mobilize assistance to ameliorate circumstances contributing to a conflict.

With regard to **peace-keeping** operations, the Secretary-General:

- Appealed to States for information on the kind and number of personnel they were prepared to offer the United Nations should the need for new operations arise;

- Urged action by the General Assembly to speed up the financing of new operations;
- Supported financing such missions out of Member States' defence, rather than foreign affairs, budgets;
- Recommended that the Security Council consider collective measures that would come into effect if there were attacks on United Nations military or civilian members;
- Recommended that the United Nations give serious thought to the idea of a "rapid reaction" military force;
- Recommended that, in order to provide a credible and impartial source of information and to counter misinformation in the planning of future operations, the operations planners examine the possible need for an information capacity at an early date.

With regard to post-conflict **peace-building**, the Secretary-General recommended a wide range of activities, including:

- Joint efforts by the parties to repatriate refugees;
- Removal of land mines;
- Improvement of transportation;
- Monitoring of elections;
- Rebuilding or strengthening of governmental institutions;
- Protection of human rights.

In 1995, the Secretary-General addressed the issue of the United Nations' expanded role in **peace-building**. Most recent conflicts, he observed, had been within States, fought by armies and irregular forces, often in circumstances where State institutions collapsed and humanitarian emergencies developed. In this context, he said, peace-keeping efforts called for more complex interventions. The United Nations was being called upon to promote national reconciliation and re-establish effective government, in addition to carrying out its humanitarian and military tasks.

This kind of operation, the Secretary-General said, had been deployed with success in such places as Namibia, Cambodia, and Mozambique, where a negotiated settlement had already been reached. The United Nations was thus called upon to help the parties implement the settlement and undertake an unprecedented variety of functions, from the demobilization of forces to the organization of elections. Such multifunctional operations highlighted the role the United Nations can play over a number of years, following a negotiated settlement, to ensure that the causes of war are eradicated.

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Government by the Mozambican National Resistance (RENAMO).

An agreement for a cease-fire and separation and demobilization of both side's forces was entered into in 1992, with the United Nations given the central role in monitoring the implementation of the peace accord. Despite problems and delays, by 1994 more than 76,000 soldiers from both the Government and RENAMO had been demobilized and 155,000 weapons collected from the troops of both parties and from paramilitary forces. In addition, a programme to return some 43 million refugees and displaced people to their homes was undertaken.

The country's first multi-party elections were held in October 1994. The Secretary-General's Special Representative oversaw free and fair elections, and the Security Council called on all parties to continue the process of national reconciliation. Its task successfully fulfilled, the **UN Operation in Mozambique (ONUMOZ)** completed its withdrawal from the country in early 1995.

SOME OTHER PEACEMAKING HIGHLIGHTS

Afghanistan

Following almost eight years of complex negotiations by the Secretary-General and his Representative, the Geneva Accords were signed in 1988 by the Foreign Ministers of Afghanistan and Pakistan, as well as those of the Soviet Union and the United States as Guarantor States. The **UN Good Offices Mission in Afghanistan and Pakistan (UNGOMAP)** was established in April 1988 to help implement the Geneva Accords. The Accords stipulated the complete withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan and a bilateral agreement on non-interference and non-intervention between Afghanistan and Pakistan. The Agreement also marked the first time the Soviet Union and the United States became co-guarantors of an agreement negotiated under the Secretary-General's auspices.

With the expiration of the mission's mandate in March 1990, some of its military observers were attached to a newly established Office of the Secretary-General in Afghanistan and Pakistan to assist the Secretary-General's personal representative in pursuing his good offices mission. The assisting office and its military advisers projected the Secretary-General's peacemaking efforts into the field — a new step in UN peacemaking and peace-keeping.

Following a resolution of the General Assembly in December 1993, a Special Mission was sent to Afghanistan to facilitate national rapprochement. In January 1995, the United Nations political presence was moved inside Afghanistan to Jalalabad/Kabul: **Office of the Secretary-General in Afghanistan (OSGA)**.

Central America

The UN has played a major role in the Central American peace process. The years 1989 and 1990 saw the establishment of the UN's first operation to monitor an electoral process in a sovereign State — the UN Observer Mission for the Verification of the Electoral Process in Nicaragua — as well as the establishment of the **UN Observer Group in Central America (ONUCA)**, and, jointly with the Organization of American States (OAS), the International Support and Verification Commission. These missions were launched to ensure compliance with agreements reached through complex negotiations that began with the first attempts of

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PAST AND CONTINUING UN INVOLVEMENTS

Zaire, formerly the **Congo** and a Belgian colony, became independent in June 1960. Within a short period of its independence, disorder broke out, and Belgium sent in its troops, stating that the aim was to protect and evacuate Europeans.

The Congolese Government asked for United Nations military assistance to protect the Congo against external aggression that was leading to the disintegration of the country as its key province, Katanga, now Shaba, was attempting to secede. During the next four years, the UN operation in the Congo helped the Congolese Government restore and maintain the country's political independence and territorial integrity, to help maintain law and order, and to put into effect a wide and long-term programme of technical assistance.

To meet this task, an exceptionally large team was assembled. At its peak, the United Nations Force totalled nearly 20,000 officers and civilians.

Although not without its set-backs, including clashes with secessionist forces and the death of Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld in a plane crash in 1961, the Force was completely withdrawn in 1964 and the Mission deemed a success.

The Middle East. In 1949, a UN envoy, Dr. Ralph J. Bunche of the United States, was able to secure a cease-fire between the new State of Israel and four Arab States — Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria. The armistice agreements held until 1956, when, following Egypt's nationalization of the Suez Canal, Israel and later France and the United Kingdom intervened militarily against Egypt. This led immediately to the establishing of the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF), the first United Nations peace-keeping force.

UNEF was withdrawn in May 1967, and the following month fighting broke out again between Israel and Egypt, Jordan, and Syria. When hostilities ended six days later, Israel had occupied the Sinai and the Gaza Strip, the West Bank of the Jordan River, including East Jerusalem, and part of the Syrian Golan Heights.

After the Six-Day War, the Security Council adopted in November 1967 resolution 242, the basis for future negotiations aimed at achieving peace in the Middle East.

Various agreements, hostilities, and disengagements continued through the years, with UN envoys, missions, and observer forces dispatched to the area and the General Assembly increasingly turning its attention to other aspects of the Middle East question.

In 1974, the General Assembly recognized the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) as "the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people".

In 1991, the General Assembly reaffirmed a set of principles for achieving a comprehensive peace, including:

- Withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, and from the other occupied Arab territories;
- Dismantlement of the Israeli settlements in those territories;
- Arrangements guaranteeing the security of all States in the region within secure and internationally recognized boundaries;

- Resolution of the problem of Palestine refugees in conformity with General Assembly resolutions; and
- Guarantee of freedom of access to holy places, religious buildings and sites.

Following several months of Norwegian-mediated secret negotiations, Israel and the PLO on 10 September 1993 exchanged letters of mutual recognition. The PLO recognized Israel's right to exist, and Israel recognized the PLO as the representative of the Palestinian people. Three days later in Washington the parties signed a historic agreement opening the way to Palestinian self-rule and providing for Israeli withdrawal and the establishment of an interim Palestinian self-government.

In 1994, after several months of talks, Israel and Jordan signed a declaration that terminated the state of war between them. The United Nations has continued to play an active role as a full participant in working groups of multilateral negotiations dealing with Middle East regional issues, such as arms control and regional security, water resources, environment, economic development, and refugees.

Korean Peninsula. On 25 June 1950, the Security Council declared an attack by North Korean forces on the Republic of Korea to be a breach of the peace. Two days later the Security Council, acting in the absence of the Soviet Union, recommended that United Nations Member States furnish the necessary assistance to the Republic of Korea to repel the attack and restore stability on the Korean peninsula.

The Security Council asked all Member States providing military forces to make them available to a unified command under the United States. Troops from 16 nations, medical units from five nations, and the military force of the Republic of Korea formed the United Nations Command, which, although authorized to fly the United Nations flag, was not a United Nations peace-keeping operation placed under the command of the Secretary-General, but an international force acting under the unified command.

Fighting continued until July 1953, when an Armistice Agreement was signed between the United Nations Command and the Chinese-North Korean Command. The agreement established a Military Armistice Commission to supervise the implementation of the Armistice Agreement and to settle any violation through negotiations.

The **UN Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea (UNCURK)** remained in the country until it was dissolved by the General Assembly in 1973. In 1974, the General Assembly urged North and South Korea to continue their dialogue to expedite reunification, and the question of Korea was taken off the agenda of the General Assembly. Both the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and the Republic of Korea maintained observer status at the General Assembly until September 1991, when both were admitted to the United Nations.

In March 1993, the DPRK announced its intent to withdraw from the **Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)** (*see section on disarmament, page 23*). The Safeguards Agreement which it signed in 1991 permitted the **International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)** to inspect its nuclear facilities. But an IAEA request to inspect two additional sites was denied, leading to the DPRK's announcement. The Security Council called upon the DPRK to reconsider its withdrawal.

Following negotiations with the United States, the DPRK announced in June that it had suspended its withdrawal. In December, the Secretary-General visited the Korean peninsula for discussions with the two countries, including the nuclear issue. Further negotiations with the United States led in October 1994 to an "Agreed Framework" on an overall resolution of the issue. Contacts between the two countries continued to settle a number of outstanding questions.

Iraq-Kuwait. The response of the United Nations to Iraq's 2 August 1990 invasion of Kuwait has involved the full range of options at the disposal of the international community for the maintenance of international peace and security — good offices, sanctions, enforcement action, peace-keeping, humanitarian assistance and a pioneering role for the Organization in practical disarmament.

After the invasion, the United Nations immediately undertook wide-ranging diplomatic efforts to attain a peaceful resolution to the crisis. The Secretary-General met with the Iraqi Foreign Minister in August 1990 and with Iraq's President in January 1991, and consulted with other political leaders and concerned parties. In a series of resolutions adopted during the same period, the Security Council demanded Iraq's withdrawal, imposed comprehensive mandatory sanctions on both Iraq and occupied Kuwait and endorsed a naval blockade to enforce those measures.

However, Iraq failed to comply with the Council's resolutions, and coalition forces, acting in accordance with the the Council's authorization but not under the direction or control of the United Nations, successfully ousted Iraqi forces from Kuwait and restored Kuwait's sovereignty. Since the cessation of hostilities on 27 February, a multifaceted United Nations effort has sought to restore peace to the region and ensure that Iraq can no longer pose a threat to its neighbours.

- The **United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission (UNIKOM)**, established in April 1991, continues to monitor a demilitarized zone along the border.
- The **United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Boundary Commission**, established in May 1991, demarcated the disputed boundary between the two countries — the first time in history the Organization was called upon to demarcate a boundary between two Member States.
- Since April 1991, the **United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM)**, with the **International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)**, has completed destruction of Iraq's massive chemical weapons stocks, established a comprehensive system to ensure that Iraq does not reconstitute its prohibited nuclear programmes and deployed a system for ongoing monitoring and verification of Iraq's military capabilities
- Since August 1992, the Commission established to administer the **United Nations Compensation Fund** for the victims of Iraq's invasion has been reviewing several categories of claims covering death, personal injury, forced departure from Iraq and Kuwait and other associated damages, for which Iraq is obligated to pay in accordance with UN resolutions. In 1994, the Fund paid out $2.7 million to the first successful claimants. By mid-1995, the Fund had approved awards totalling $1.3 billion to 350,000 people from 67 countries and international organizations presenting Palestinian claims. However, the payment of these and any future compensation awards was being hindered due to lack of sufficient resources in the Compensation Fund.

Iraq's invasion of Kuwait and related factors have caused a serious deterioration in the country's economic situation as well as widespread suffering and displacement among the Iraqi civilian population. The United Nations has sought to mitigate the effects of this situation through an inter-agency programme of humanitarian aid focusing in particular on the provision of medical supplies and the restoration of water, sewage and electricity supply systems. Iraq, citing concerns about its sovereignty, has refused to allow implementation of a plan to use the proceeds from the sale of Iraqi petroleum and petroleum products to pay for humanitarian activities, for the Compensation Fund and for other United Nations operations.

◀ *from page 19*

the so-called Contadora Group (Colombia, Mexico, Panama, and Venezuela) in 1983 to find a solution to the problems afflicting the region.

Iran-Iraq

The Security Council's unanimous adoption in July 1987 of resolution 598 on the conflict between Iran and Iraq contained a peace plan that, as a first step, called for an immediate cease-fire and for the withdrawal of forces to internationally recognized boundaries. Following the acceptance of the resolution by Iran and Iraq, the Secretary-General negotiated a cease-fire agreement between the two sides, to take effect on 20 August 1988. The Security Council then established the **UN Iran-Iraq Military Observer Group (UNIIMOG)**, composed of 350 military observers and their support staff to monitor the cease-fire and report to the Secretary-General.

By late 1990 Iran and Iraq had largely completed a troop withdrawal to the internationally recognized boundaries. The UN military observer group supervised and verified the withdrawal and defused local tension. In February 1991, the withdrawal of forces completed, the mandate of UNIIMOG came to an end.

DISARMAMENT: A POLITICAL PRIORITY FOR THE UN

Since its founding, the United Nations has considered the issue of disarmament to be among one of its priority concerns. Conceived in the midst of a devastating world war, the establishment of the United Nations also coincided with the dawn of the nuclear age. For over four decades, the global disarmament agenda was dominated by one overriding concern: to avoid nuclear confrontation. The political emphasis was on making war unthinkable while trying to limit and control weapons of war, particularly those of mass destruction.

The peace that followed the Second World War was also a period of a cold war during which the world came close to the brink of a nuclear confrontation at least once. There were other occasions when tensions mounted high among the world's most heavily armed nations. It was during some of those tense periods that the United Nations proved to be an asset as a shock absorber, a safety valve, a gentle persuader, a conscience keeper. At a time when the major military powers talked of arms control and strategic parity to deter war, the United Nations became the foremost international forum to call for disarmament.

It was during the cold war that the General Assembly held two Special Sessions on Disarmament, in 1978 and 1982. These sessions served the purpose of identifying long-term objectives, priority issues and strategies.

One of the decisions reached by the first Special Session on Disarmament (SSODI) was to establish a **Disarmament Fellowship Programme** at the United Nations which is now attended by diplomats from thirty countries. The second Special Session on Disarmament (SSODII) launched a **World Disarmament Campaign** aimed at generating public understanding and support for the Organization's disarmament objectives.

Through a series of in-depth studies on disarmament issues, the United Nations Secretariat provided information and analyses to assist Member States in their deliberations. Through many seminars, workshops and conferences in various parts of the world, it facilitated regional initiatives on issues of specific concern. In 1986, when global military spending had peaked at close to a trillion dollars a year, the United Nations hosted an international conference on the relationship between disarmament and development.

By now, agreement has been reached to ban the production and manufacture of chemical weapons and on their destruction. There has also been a drastic reduction in global strategic arsenals as a result of bilateral agreements between the United States and the Russian Federation. With the indefinite extension of the **Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty** in May 1995, opportunities have opened up for additional measures to bring about an eventual elimination of nuclear weapons. The deadline for the conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty has been set for 1996. There is also agreement to begin negotiations on the cut-off of the production of fissile material for weapons purposes.

The end of the cold war has ushered in heady times for the disarmament community. In a general sense, disarmament issues that were once deadlocked are now open for discussion.

MAJOR DISARMAMENT TREATIES

The following disarmament agreements have been concluded:

- The **Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty** (1970), the cornerstone of nuclear agreements, which prohibits the spread of nuclear weapons from nuclear to non-nuclear States while facilitating the exchange of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes; and commits the nuclear-weapon States to negotiate measures to end the nuclear arms race. The Treaty also established an international system of safeguards, implemented by the International Atomic Energy Agency, aimed at preventing the diversion of nuclear energy from peaceful purposes to nuclear weapons. The treaty was extended indefinitely by its current and nearly universal membership of 175 States Parties in May 1995.
- The **Chemical Weapons Convention**, which prohibits the production, use and spread of chemical weapons and provides for the destruction of existing stockpiles, was concluded in 1992.
- The United States and Soviet Union concluded, within a year and half, two treaties on the reduction of their strategic offensive arms (**START I** in 1991 and **START II** in 1993).
- The **INF Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles** (1987) spells out numerous obligations that nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapons States agree to undertake regarding nuclear weapons, nuclear explosive devices and nuclear energy.
- The **Convention on Excessively Injurious or Indiscriminate Weapons** (1981) restricts or prohibits the use of mines and booby traps, incendiary weapons and weapons which injure or kill their victims by fragments that X-rays cannot detect in the human body.
- The **Convention on Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons** (1972) is considered the first international agreement providing for genuine disarmament — that is, the destruction of existing weapons.

Those that were being discussed have better prospects for reaching agreements. New approaches are also being considered to accelerate the process of disarmament outside the framework of bilateral and multilateral negotiations. Regional initiatives are afoot for closer scrutiny of armaments-related concerns specific to some parts of the world.

Disarmament Machinery at the United Nations

The United Nations machinery dealing with disarmament and related international security issues has been adapted over the years to respond to changing international relations. The General Assembly works through two bodies open to all Members: the Disarmament and International Security Committee (First Committee), which deals with all disarmament items on the Assembly's agenda, and the **United Nations Disarmament Commission**, a specialized deliberative body which focuses on specific issues. Together, these bodies give the entire UN membership the regular opportunity to deliberate and make recommendations on all items of interest in the field of disarmament and international security and peace.

The **Conference on Disarmament**, which has a limited number of members, is the single global disarmament negotiating forum. The Conference has a unique relationship with the United Nations; it defines its own rules of procedure and develops its own agenda, taking into account the recommendations of the General Assembly, and reports to the Assembly annually. It has considered a wide range of items related to nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction as well as to conventional weapons. For example, after long negotiations, it concluded the 1992 Chemical Weapons Convention. Currently, the Conference is negotiating a comprehensive nuclear test-ban treaty.

The **United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR)** is an autonomous institution established by the General Assembly in 1980 to undertake independent research on disarmament and related problems, particularly international security. UNIDIR's current work covers three main lines of research: nuclear non-proliferation; disarmament and conflict resolution, concentrating on the disarmament of warring parties as an integral part of peace-keeping operations; and regional security issues, mainly on arms limitation and confidence-building in the Middle East.

Looking ahead

The UN's disarmament agenda for the future is likely to be placed in the context of broader political initiatives for preventive diplomacy, peace-keeping and peacemaking. Whereas peace-keeping deals with the incidence of armed conflicts, preventive diplomacy addresses the causes of conflicts and peacemaking addresses the consequences of conflicts. Disarmament deals with the instruments of armed conflicts and its tasks continue irrespective of whether or not these instruments are actually used.

The elimination of nuclear weapons and of other weapons of mass destruction continue to be major disarmament concerns. At the same time, other issues have been gaining prominence. In an innovative step, arms transfers of major conventional weapons systems are being monitored by the **United Nations Register of Conventional Arms**, opened in 1992. The Secretary-General is promoting efforts to address the problem of land-mines and other light weapons. Efforts are also under way to deal with the growing need for conversion from military to civilian fields of activity and for the safe and cost-effective destruction of weapons. The question of verification and compliance with the wide range of agreements now in existence has taken on a new importance in the context of regional measures of confidence-building.

Among the major areas for ongoing efforts at disarmament in the near future are the following:

- multilateral negotiations on a comprehensive nuclear test-ban treaty, which started in 1994 and are expected to be concluded no later than 1996;
- measures to strengthen the Biological Weapons Convention, including consideration of possible verification procedures;
- review of the Inhumane Weapons Convention to examine the scope and application of that treaty, focusing in particular on strengthening its Protocol on Land Mines.

DECOLONIZATION

The UN Charter committed the world's Governments to the enormous challenge of ending colonialism. In chapters devoted to non-self-governing territories, the Charter outlined the principles that have established the right of colonial peoples to govern themselves, opening the way for efforts to ensure that States which administer territories respect that right.

These principles were later amplified in another landmark document, the General Assembly's 1960 Declaration on Decolonization, titled the **Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples**.

In the more than three decades since the Declaration, some 60 former colonial territories, inhabited by more than 80 million people, have attained independence and joined the United Nations as sovereign Member States. The number of newly independent states is reflected in the constantly growing number of Member States.

- In 1945, there were 51 Member States of the United Nations;
- In 1960, there were 100 UN Member States;
- In 1980, there were 153 UN Member States;
- In 1995, there are 185 UN Member States.

A year after adopting the Declaration on Decolonization, the General Assembly established a new organ to see that its principles were being applied: the Special Committee on the Situation with Regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, commonly referred to as the Special Committee on Decolonization.

- When the Special Committee began its work in 1962, a total of 64 non-self-governing territories were on its list. By 1995, the list had dwindled to 17 territories, most of them island territories in the Pacific and the Caribbean, with a total population of about one and a half million.

In its consideration of the non-self-governing territories, the General Assembly has each year reaffirmed that the continuation of colonialism in all its forms and manifestations is incompatible with the Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Declaration on decolonization.

- The General Assembly has set a goal of ending colonialism by the year 2000, declaring the period 1990-2000 as the **International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism.**

The Trusteeship Council

The Trusteeship Council — one of the six main UN organs — was established under the UN Charter to ensure that Governments responsible for administering Trust Territories take adequate steps to prepare them for self-government or independence. By 1950, 11 Trusteeship Agreements had been approved, with some 20 million people living in those Trust Territories. Current UN Member States such as Cameroon, Tanzania and Papua New Guinea were among such Territories.

The aims of the Trusteeship system were completed in 1994, when the Security Council terminated the Trusteeship Agreement for the last of the original 11 Trusteeships — the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (Palau), administered by the United States. All Trust Territories have now attained self-government or independence, either as separate States or by joining neighbouring independent countries. The Trusteeship Council, having amended its rules of procedure, will now meet as and where occasion may require.

HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

Since its inception, the United Nations has had a major role in the provision of humanitarian assistance around the globe. UNICEF and UNHCR, for example, had their origins in the turmoil of the Second World War. Today, the second generation of UN peace-keeping efforts is attempting to better integrate humanitarian assistance efforts into the larger processes of peace-keeping, peacemaking and long-term development.

The **Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA),** for example, was set up in 1992 precisely to assist the Organization in coordinating the different aspects of emergency assistance in natural and man-made disasters. *(For more on DHA, see page 28.)*

The strengthened United Nations role in this area is a timely development, given the explosion, since the end of the cold war, of ethnic, religious, and civil conflicts in many parts of the world and the resulting misery these have inflicted on millions of innocent men, women, and children.

- During 1994, in the face of civil war and other conflicts, the UN provided humanitarian assistance to more than 40 million people in some 20 countries.
- Deaths from natural disasters have risen almost tenfold since the 1960s. Developing countries account for 90 per cent of deaths related to natural disasters, indicating the key role that poverty plays in raising the toll of destruction.
- Economic losses from natural disasters increased threefold from the 1960s to the 1980s and rose 40 per cent — from an estimated $44 billion to $62 billion — between 1991 and 1992.

The United Nations is active in this area both through its operational agencies and as a catalyst for efforts by Governments, major intergovernmental humanitarian organizations, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

In situations of conflict, humanitarian assistance has become an integral part of establishing peace and security. Bringing relief to those afflicted can supply new avenues for negotiation, build a climate of confidence and create the environment for addressing the underlying political problems. These are some elements of what has been called **humanitarian diplomacy**.

The humanitarian task is not limited to immediate relief, but involves long-term rehabilitation and development: what is called "the relief-to-development continuum". The best protection against disaster — both natural and man-made — is economic and social development.

The Key Players

The seven agencies providing humanitarian assistance are UNICEF, UNDP, UNHCR, WHO, FAO, WFP and UNESCO. Also, the **Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA)**, set up in 1992 to address emergencies such as those inSomalia and Rwanda, coordinates relief efforts of the UN system with the larger "relief-to-development continuum" in mind, as well as addressing those aspects of emergencies where no UN agency has a specific mandate, such as assistance to internally displaced persons and mine-clearance operations.

- **The World Food Programme (WFP)** — uses food aid to meet relief needs and to support basic development projects such as the construction of roads and sanitation systems. Over two million tons of food is distributed each year by the WFP. Nearly 30 million people facing acute food shortages in 36 countries benefited from this assistance in 1994.

- **The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)** — aims to provide international protection and assistance to all those under its responsibility, including refugees and others in similar situations, returnees, and some groups of internally displaced persons and to find durable solutions to their problems. The basic human rights of refugees include protection against "refoulement" (return to a country in which they legitimately fear persecution). Although UNHCR's mandate is to protect and assist refugees, the Office has been increasingly called upon to come to the aid of a wider range of people living in similar situations. Former refugees who have recently returned to their homelands (returnees) are assisted by UNHCR, which monitors their situation. In addition, in some situations, at the request of the UN Secretary-General and the country concerned, and in order to prevent further displacement and suffering, UNHCR assists large numbers of people displaced within the borders of their own country. Finally, UNHCR may be called upon to assist victims of conflict, who have not necessarily been displaced, such as the population of Sarajevo.

    - **Assistance to Refugees** — International assistance to refugees was first organized in 1921, with the appointment of a **League of Nations High Commissioner for Refugees**. In 1943, the **United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA)** was established to bring aid to war-stricken areas of the world. Through its services, some six million displaced persons were repatriated at the end of the Second World War. UNRRA also helped millions of people in Europe through difficult post-war winters before being disbanded. In 1946, the **International Refugee Organization (IRO)** — the Constitution of which was approved by the United Nations General Assembly — assumed UNRRA's functions. On 3 December 1949, the General Assembly, recognizing the continuing responsibility of the United Nations for the international protection of refugees after the termination of IRO, decided to appoint a **United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.** IRO, which continued operating until February 1952, evolved into the **Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.**

- **Refugees worldwide** — The total number of persons who come directly under UNHCR's responsibility has risen from around 17 million in 1991, to 23 million in 1993, and to more than 27 million at 1 January 1995.
- In 1994, **refugees and asylum** issues took on renewed intensity, as the catastrophic exodus from Rwanda and the war in the former Yugoslavia continued a worrisome trend of civil wars and ethnic violence resulting in humanitarian crises.
- Some two million people fled **Rwanda** in 1994, in conditions of extreme suffering. July and August 1994 saw the most dramatic and rapid exodus in the history of UNHCR, as over one million Rwandese fled into Zaire. UNHCR has been at the forefront of efforts to shelter, protect and assist refugees from both Rwanda and Burundi in their countries of asylum in the Great Lakes area, until the conditions can be created for them to return to their homes in safety and dignity.
- In the **former Yugoslavia**, since 1991, UNHCR has been the lead agency in orchestrating the UN humanitarian effort to protect and help civilians. In 1995, this operation has benefited 3.56 million people. The UNHCR humanitarian airlift to Sarajevo — the longest such operation in aviation history — marked its 1,000th day on 29 March 1995. However, because of the security situation and frequent obstruction of access, both the airlift and humanitarian convoys in Bosnia and Herzegovina are often interrupted for lengthy periods, depriving the population of food and other vital sustenance.
- In the **Caucasus** and **Central Asia**, UNHCR continues to assist displaced people and refugees in Armenia (380,000), Azerbaijan (890,000), Georgia (280,000) and Chechnya, Russian Federation (240,000). In Tajikistan, UNHCR has provided protection and assistance to over 550,000 returnees and internally displaced persons and is currently phasing out its programme. Other UN agencies will phase in development assistance.
- In the **Horn of Africa**, conflict has produced hundreds of thousands of refugees since the late 1970s. In 1995, UNHCR protects and assists some 1.6 million refugees, of whom the largest groups are Somalis in Kenya and Ethiopia, Ethiopians and Eritreans in the Sudan, and Southern Sudanese in Uganda. Repatriation from Sudan to Eritrea is under way.
- In **West Africa**, large numbers of Liberians and Sierra Leoneans continue to flee conflict in their countries, with major concentrations of refugees in Côte d'Ivoire (360,000) and Guinea (553,200).
- Positive developments in 1994 included the successful repatriation of over 1.6 million refugees to **Mozambique** and ongoing repatriations to **Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Guatemala, Eritrea** and **Myanmar**.

Natural and Manmade Disasters

The United Nations is also taking the lead in stepping up preparedness for natural and man-made disasters and their aftermath.

The **World Meteorological Organization (WMO)** has spared millions of people from the calamitous effects of both natural and man-made disasters. Its early warning system, which utilizes thousands of surface monitors as well as satellites, has provided information on the dispersal of oil spills and has predicted long-term droughts. The system has allowed for the efficient distribution of food aid to drought regions, such as southern Africa in 1992.

- Both UNEP and FAO have early warning systems that also gather data indicating areas and populations at risk due to poor harvests or other problems. WFP stockpiles food supplies in or near areas at risk so as to reduce the time and expense of emergency operations.

Clearing land-mines — From Angola to Afghanistan, El Salvador to Cambodia, thousands of civilians are killed or maimed by the estimated 100 million land-mines scattered across the globe. The United Nations is leading an international effort to clear land-mines from former battlefields in Afghanistan, Angola, Cambodia, El Salvador, Mozambique, Rwanda and Somalia.

Mine clearance is an important part of humanitarian and peace-keeping operations. In 1988, with the advent of the **United Nations Coordination Office for Assistance to Afghanistan**, the United Nations was for the first time given a mandate to clear mines. The United Nations also organizes training programmes for those living in mined areas, especially returning refugees and displaced persons.

- At least 16 United Nations staff members have died and 62 have been injured in mine-clearance operations in Afghanistan, where approximately 30 United Nations teams operate.
- At the **United Nations Cambodian Mine Action Centre**, it takes a team of 20 trained workers a week to clear a piece of jungle the size of two football fields.
- United Nations experience in Afghanistan and Cambodia shows that the most effective clearance teams are those involving the local people as much as possible, to ease communication and to increase trust and confidence in the programme.

In 1980, the United Nations concluded the **Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects,** and a related **Protocol on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Mines, Booby-Traps or Other Devices**. These instruments entered into force in December 1983, barring the use of land mines against civilians, forbidding the distribution of "remotely delivered" mines planted by plane unless records are kept on where mines are sown, requiring record-keeping of all mine placement, and urging a commitment to destroy mines once the conflict ends. But only 36 nations have ratified these instruments.

The Preparatory Group of Governmental Experts which formulated a draft for the newly revised land-mine Protocol, has made several proposals to be considered by States parties in Vienna in September 1995. If adopted, they could significantly improve the protection of civilian populations.

NOTES

1. *Anarchy or Order*, Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, Annual Reports 1982-1991, United Nations, New York, 1991, p. 264.
2. Press release SC/5361, 31 January 1992.
3. Secretary-General's speech to the 25th Vienna Seminar, SG/SM/5572, 3 March 1995.

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Economic and Social Development

> *This United Nations family of agencies, with its thousands of international civil servants and experts enlisted from all over the world, is the main vehicle through which new traditions of working together for common purposes are beginning to be established among the nations, side by side with the older traditions of purely national service.*
>
> **—Dag Hammarskjöld, Secretary-General of the United Nations (1953 to 1961)** [1]

The astonishing economic and social transformations that have taken place globally in the past 50 years have been significantly affected in their direction and shape by the work of the United Nations. The international development agenda, outlined by programmes of the successive **International Development Decades**, beginning in 1961, which aimed at attaining accelerated economic and social progress for developing countries, along with the development policies formulated by the UN family of organizations, have been reflected in the agendas set at the national and local levels.

While the attention of the international community has invariably been focused on immediate political concerns, the UN serves to remind Member States that the search for global peace and security has its roots in, and is dependent upon, a more equal economic and social development among all countries. The burgeoning social problems that we now face on a global scale demonstrate how quickly conditions can deteriorate when they do not receive the national and international attention they deserve.

Despite the UN's association in the public mind with peace and security issues, economic and social concerns have always been the focus of some 80 per cent of the United Nations regular budget and personnel. The UN Charter mandates the promotion of higher standards of living, full employment, and economic and social progress, as one of the main functions of the United Nations.

It was out of this ongoing concern that the Secretary-General produced ***An Agenda for Development*** in May 1994, which was supplemented by further recommendations for action after extensive debate within the General Assembly, ECOSOC and elsewhere (*see page 42.*) As well, during the first half of this decade, the cycle of world conferences and summits of world leaders on education, children, the environment, human rights, population, social development, women, crime and urban problems has revised and advanced the development agenda, emphasizing links between development and its counterparts, peace and human security. The growing number of heads of State and Government who have attended recent development summits: — the World Summit for Children, over 70 (a record at that time), the Earth Summit, 104, and the World Summit for Social Development, 117 — is an indication of the increasing priority being given to these issues by the international community.

The centrality of the United Nations in dealing with economic and development issues stems from the Organization's universality. All voices are heard in UN debates: those of government representatives of the least developed countries as well as of the economically more advanced and prosperous; heavily indebted and creditor countries; independent experts and eminent persons from the business, research and academic communities; and representatives of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), which, through their access to the Economic and Social Council, articulate the special needs and concerns of their constituencies — often the world's poorest and most vulnerable. At the UN, all the components of the world community are given the opportunity to shape international policy.

Much of the development work — ranging from data collection and analysis to policy formulation to field projects — focuses on developing regions, where development assistance needs are greatest.

- Three fourths of the world's people live in developing countries, and 1.3 billion are living in abject poverty.
- While the world's 23 richest countries taken together have a per capita income of about $22,000, the 40 poorest countries have a per capita income of $390 — a ratio of 56 to 1 that continues to widen.

The UN is concerned with narrowing the gaps between rich and poor, the haves and have-nots, both internationally and within nations. To this end, it also acts to help the poor and deprived in industrialized countries by stressing long-term policies that will reduce unemployment, poverty and social conflict.

The General Assembly has consistently stressed the need to reshape international economic relations so developing countries can take their just place in the world economy. In a series of 10-year **International Development Strategies** adopted since 1961, the Assembly has recommended measures to coordinate the efforts of Governments and international organizations to reduce the gap between rich and poor countries.

In 1974, the General Assembly adopted the declaration and action programme on establishing a **New International Economic Order (NIEO)**, which outlined measures to narrow the growing gap between North and South. The NIEO included the setting of a target for official development assistance (ODA) from industrialized countries to developing countries amounting to at least 0.7 per cent of the donor country's gross national product. While few countries have reached the ODA goal (specifically, Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden), it has remained an important benchmark by which the progress of North/South relations has been measured over the past two decades.

THE UN ORGANIZATION

As our social, economic and environmental problems are increasingly international in scope, the United Nations becomes more and more relevant and active. A uniquely universal forum, the Organization offers a means to international agreement on how to deal with global problems that are beyond the control of any one state acting alone, and a mechanism for sharing burdens and responsibilities. Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali recently noted:

> *More and more problems are global. The United Nations is the global forum for issues such as environment and world health. It provides as well the mechanism and the network to address such issues on a global scale.* [2]

Under the United Nations Charter, the **Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)** is the principal body coordinating the economic and social work of the United Nations and its specialized agencies and institutions. Among other things, ECOSOC is the central forum for discussing international economic and social issues and for formulating policy recommendations on those issues.

ECOSOC coordinates the development work of United Nations bodies such as the five regional commissions and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund, and the World Food Programme, as well as that of specialized agencies such as the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the World Health Organization, the International Labour Organization, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization.

The United Nations' development goals are given practical expression through programmes ranging from technical cooperation to surveys and studies and to the convening of international conferences, and from comprehensive development planning to special projects in individual fields such as trade, industry and agriculture.

To help Governments to establish a more effective framework for development, the United Nations offers support in the preparation of national development plans which ensure balanced economic and social progress and the best use of available human, physical and financial resources. It helps developing countries mobilize the funds needed to pay for development programmes, both by increasing their export earnings and by attracting outside capital under terms they can afford.

The UN system's annual disbursements, including loans and grants for development, amount to more than $10 billion, not including the World Bank. In addition, the **World Bank** annually lends over $20 billion for programmes and projects that range from irrigation systems to primary health and education networks. [3] It also helps Governments revitalize economies through programmes that boost private enterprise. The World Bank, at the forefront in mobilizing support for developing countries worldwide, has loaned $333 billion for development projects since 1946. [4]

The **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** assists Governments in setting sound fiscal policies designed to promote efficiency in Government and the public sector and promote free-market systems. Increasingly, the IMF assists in the design of social safety nets to protect vulnerable groups from economic shocks brought about by the structural reforms it recommends.

Together with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, the United Nations agencies and programmes have helped many countries improve their economic management, offered training for government finance officials, and provided financial assistance to countries experiencing temporary balance of payment difficulties.

The **United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)** focuses on increased participation in the world economy of developing countries and, more recently, countries undergoing transition to a market economy; it is the main organ of the General Assembly on the interrelated issues of trade, investment, finance and technology. UNCTAD has worked to obtain special trade preferences for developing countries to export their products to developed countries. UNCTAD has played a leading role in mobilizing support for the least developed countries and organizing the two **United Nations Conferences on the Least Developed Countries** in 1981 and 1990. Within the framework of the **General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT)**, which in January 1995 was replaced by the **World Trade Organization (WTO)**, the United Nations has supported trade liberalization that will increase economic development opportunities for developing countries.

The **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)** is the central coordinating organization for United Nations development activities worldwide, funding over 5,000 programmes and projects, valued at approximately $5.6 billion, designed to build Governments' management capacities, develop human resources and transfer technology in close cooperation with over 170 Member States, other UN agencies and non-governmental organizations.

Partly in response to the reassessment of development policies being undertaken by the Organization in general, UNDP began placing special emphasis on four areas of concern: poverty, employment, women and regeneration of natural resources, with poverty eradication as an overriding goal.

The **International Labour Organization (ILO)** is the focal point within the UN system on labour and employment issues. In 1969, the ILO was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for a half century of service on behalf of working people everywhere. It emphasizes efforts in the areas of job creation, the improvement of working conditions and the protection of workers' rights. ILO has established international labour standards that form a comprehensive code of law and practice affecting the safety and rights of workers worldwide.

In promoting worker's rights, the ILO has worked to guarantee freedom of the right to association, the right to organize, to collective bargaining, and the rights of indigenous and tribal peoples. It has promoted employment and equal remuneration, and has sought to eliminate discrimination and child labour.

By setting safety standards, the ILO has helped reduce the toll of work-related accidents. One of its most important functions is the adoption of conventions and recommendations that set international labour standards. The conventions oblige ratifying Member States to put their provisions into effect. The ILO has a special procedure for investigating complaints of infringements of trade union rights.

The **International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)** helps the rural poor worldwide through its system of providing credit to improve food production, distribution, rural employment and nutrition among the poorest and most marginalized groups. It has benefited over 230 million people in nearly 100 developing countries. The Fund was one of the major initiatives of the 1974 Rome World Food Conference. (*See page 46.*)

The **United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)** is the United Nations system's central coordinating body in industrial development. It encourages and assists developing countries to promote and accelerate their industrialization. UNIDO has served as a "matchmaker" for North-South, South-South and East-West investment, promoting entrepreneurship and self-reliance, industrial cooperation and technology transfer and cost-effective, environmentally sensitive industry.

The **Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)** works to end hunger through improving food production and distribution. The FAO acts as the lead agency for rural development in the UN system by introducing improved agricultural techniques that increase production, while keeping costs of seed, fertilizer, water and pesticides at levels that small farmers can afford. It also promotes the development of fishing, sustainable uses of forest resources and plant and animal genetic resources. (*See page 46.*)

The **United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)** supports experimental projects to benefit women and bring them into the decision-making process of mainstream development activities. It seeks to promote women's access to credit, training, technology and information. It manages several hundred projects in developing regions, whose funding ranges from $2,000 to $1 million.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

With its access to data on social indicators on a global scale, the United Nations is constantly taking the pulse of the world's progress in the economic and social areas This progress has been remarkable, as overall social indicators in falling mortality and rising literacy rates, for example, attest. The UN is also in a position to recognize the areas where progress is slow and where development policies are not achieving adequate results. Despite the fact that the world is immeasurably richer than in 1945, too many people have been unable to share in this prosperity and widening gaps between rich and poor are tearing at the fabric of societies everywhere. In many areas, development has become synonymous with environmental degradation.

As outlined in **An Agenda for Development** (*see page 42*), there are many recommendations for improving the UN's capacity to promote sustainable development for all and, together with Governments and intergovernmental organizations, to better use increasingly scarce financial resources and counter the decline in development assistance.

The reformulation of development policies has produced a marked shift in development priorities in recent years. Terms such as "sustainable development", "people-centred development" and "adjustment with a human face", for example, have become part of the development lexicon, reflecting the greater emphasis on the human side of development. This new approach requires the involvement of women and other excluded groups that comprise the priority targets for assistance: the marginal and impoverished citizens of the world.

The **World Summit for Social Development** in Copenhagen in March 1995 addressed the issues of poverty, unemployment and social disintegration with these concerns in mind. It emphasized the fact that the promotion of people-centred development is the key to meeting the objectives of peace, human rights, environmental protection, reduced population growth and social integration. In the words of James Gustave Speth, Administrator of UNDP, the Summit represented "a time for all nations to recognize that it is far cheaper and far more humane to act early and to act upstream than to pick up the pieces downstream, to address the root causes of human insecurity rather than their tragic consequences." [5]

Focusing on African development

Africa, a region that has experienced serious setbacks in many areas of development, continues to be a central priority for the United Nations. In 1986, the UN convened the first — and only — special session of the General Assembly to press for international support for a specific world region and adopted the **Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development (UNPAAERD)**, 1986-1990. In 1991, the Assembly concluded that the continuing critical economic situation in Africa required a **New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF)**, with the aims of reinvigorating the continent's development actions and of intensifying international support for Africa's economic reform and development endeavours.

The objective of the New Agenda is an average real growth rate of at least six per cent a year of gross domestic product throughout the 1990s, in order for the continent to achieve sustained and sustainable economic growth and equitable development, to increase income and eradicate poverty.

The New Agenda accords special attention to human development and increased employment and promotes rapid progress towards the achievement of human-oriented goals by the year 2000 in the areas of life expectancy, integration of women in development, child and maternal mortality, nutrition, health, water and sanitation, basic education and shelter.

HEALTH

The progress in the area of health is one of the UN's great success stories. While it is difficult to quantify the impact that UN policies and programmes have had on the indicators of infant or maternal mortality, longevity or fertility rates, there is no doubt that the worldwide campaigns to raise living standards — through campaigns for literacy, water and sanitation projects, childhood immunization, family planning — and the policies adopted at national and community levels, have given an enormous boost to health indicators, especially in developing regions.

There are scores of interagency efforts in collaboration with Member States to tackle problems that no single organization or country can do on its own. Many of the successes have enormous impact.

- **Pressing for universal immunization** — Polio, tetanus, measles, whooping cough, diphtheria and tuberculosis are major killers of children. In 1974, only five per cent of children in developing countries were immunized against these diseases. Today, as a result of the efforts of UNICEF and the World Health Organization (WHO), there is an 80 per cent immunization rate, saving the lives of more than three million children each year.

- **Reducing child mortality rates** — Through oral rehydration therapy, water and sanitation and other health and nutrition measures — such as the promotion of breastfeeding — undertaken by UN agencies, child mortality rates in the developing countries have been halved since 1960. As a result of these and other measures, average life expectancy in developing countries has nearly doubled over the last 30 years, from 37 to 67 years.

- **Protecting consumers' health** — To ensure the safety of food sold in the marketplace, UN agencies have established standards for over 200 food commodities and safety limits for more than 3,000 food contaminants.

- A WHO programme, in conjunction with UNDP and the World Bank, has saved seven million children and adults from going blind from river blindness and rescued many others from guinea worm and other tropical diseases. [6]
- **Fighting parasitic diseases** — Efforts by FAO and other UN agencies in North Africa to eliminate the dreaded screw worm, a parasite that feeds on human and animal flesh, prevented the spread of the parasite, which is carried by flies, to Egypt, Tunisia, sub-Saharan Africa and Europe.
- **Providing safe drinking water** — UN agencies have worked to make safe drinking water available to 1.3 billion people in rural areas during the last decade.

The **World Health Organization** provides advice and support on primary health care to governments worldwide. It is developing a new global health policy, based on wide consultation to renew the vision of health for all into the twenty-first century.

- WHO works to **prevent, control and eliminate or eradicate major infectious diseases**. Since 1987, WHO has coordinated the Global Programme on AIDS, which closely monitors the spread of the disease and supports a variety of projects to develop comprehensive national AIDS programmes. WHO is the administrative agency for the joint and co-sponsored United Nations programme on AIDS (UNAIDS), which comes into operation on 1 January 1996. UNICEF, the UN Centre for Human Rights, UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNDCP, ILO, FAO, UNESCO and the World Bank have all taken up different aspects of the campaign for AIDS/HIV control and prevention, as well as special attention to its impact on society.
- WHO **provides a model list of essential drugs** which helps countries to match priority drugs to priority health needs, in a world in which half the population lacks regular access to the most needed medicines. WHO helps developing countries establish national drug policies, sets standards and recommends good practices in the manufacture and quality control of drugs.
- **Eradicating smallpox** — A 13-year effort by the World Health Organization resulted in the complete eradication of smallpox from the planet in 1980. The eradication has saved an estimated $1 billion a year in vaccination and monitoring, almost three times the cost of eliminating the scourge itself. WHO also helped wipe out polio from the Western hemisphere, with global eradication expected by the year 2000. That year is also the target for the eradication of dracunculiasis (guinea-worm disease) and the elimination of leprosy and neonatal tetanus.

CHILDREN

The **United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)**, the only UN agency dedicated exclusively to children, has been deeply involved in significant victories for the world's children in recent decades. Since 1960, under-five mortality has been halved and primary school enrolment has risen by more than 50 per cent. Nonetheless, each year the "silent emergency" of largely preventable childhood diseases still claims the lives of more than 12 million children under five, most of them among the world's 1.2 billion people living in poverty.

At the World Summit for Children in 1990, representatives of more than 150 countries, including 71 Heads of State or Government, formally adopted 27 specific health and development goals to radically improve children's lives by the year 2000. With UNICEF's assistance, by June 1995 more than 100 countries, with over 80 per cent of the children in developing countries, have finalized national programmes of action (NPAs) to translate those promises into reality and are making significant progress towards achieving the goals.

Approximately 2.5 million fewer children will die in 1996 than in 1990 and millions more will be saved from debilitating afflictions, thanks to the collaborative efforts of UNICEF, WHO and other UN agencies and governmental and non-governmental organizations. Among the major achievements are:

- **Immunization coverage against measles** — a disease usually no more than a nuisance in industrialized countries but a major risk for children in poor countries — has risen from about 25 per cent of children in 1980 to almost 80 per cent by mid-1995, preventing about 1.5 million child deaths each year.
- **Polio immunization** has freed large areas of the developing world, including all of the western hemisphere, from the disease. Polio still cripples more than 100,000 children each year, however, and the goal of eradication by the year 2000 demands a major global effort.
- The great majority of the 94 countries affected by **iodine deficiency disorders (IDD)** — the world's most common cause of preventable mental impairment affecting hundreds of millions of children — are now implementing national plans for iodization of all edible salt at a cost of only about five US cents per person per year. This puts them on track towards the goal of eliminating iodine deficiency disorders by the year 2000.
- Progress in the use of **oral rehydration therapy (ORT)** to treat diarrhoeal diseases has helped to reduce child deaths linked to dehydration and malnutrition from diarrhoea from 4 million in 1990 to less than 3 million in 1994. The ORT usage rate reached 50 per cent in 1994, and continued advances aim to cut in half the 1990 child death toll from diarrhoeal diseases by the year 2000.
- The incidence of debilitating **dracunculiasis (guinea-worm disease)**, a water-borne parasite, in areas of Africa and South Asia has declined to approximately 140,000 cases in 1994, a reduction of over 90 per cent since 1990. Eradication by the year 2000 is now possible.

Because discrimination and disparities based on gender are a major obstacle to human development and a fundamental violation of human rights, the equality and empowerment of women and girls is a priority in UNICEF programming activities. A third of its goals relate specifically to the needs of girls and women, including reducing maternal mortality, increasing female literacy rates, supporting access to family-planning information and services, and encouraging breastfeeding.

The **Convention on the Rights of the Child**, adopted unanimously by the UN General Assembly in 1989, and ratified by 175 countries as of 15 June 1995, is nearing universal acceptance. UNICEF has a special role in promoting ratification and helping ensure implementation of this ground-breaking human rights treaty, which sets comprehensive standards for ensuring children's health, education, social development, personal freedom, and protection from all forms of abuse and ill-treatment, including child labour and sexual exploitation.

POPULATION

When the United Nations was founded 50 years ago, no one knew how many people there were on the planet. It was the United Nations that organized and coordinated the first global census campaign. By 1951, it was able to estimate the world population at 2.4 billion. The Population Division, in collaboration with the Statistical Division, charts global demographic trends through data collection and analysis.

Through the global studies prepared by the United Nations, it became clear to the international community by the mid-1960s that increasing population growth rates, as a result of persistent high fertility rates and declining mortality rates, would have serious implications for development and for the environment. The United Nations has been in the forefront of facing this challenge.

The **United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)** was established in 1969 to help developing countries solve their population problems and raise awareness of these issues in both developing and industrialized countries. It has programmes in 150 developing countries which help Governments formulate population and development strategies and provide reproductive health and family-planning services as well as population policy and advocacy, collect and analyse related data, promote gender awareness and conduct contraceptive research. UNFPA places great emphasis on the participation of women in all aspects of its policy and programme work.

Through its programmes, UNFPA has enabled millions of couples to make informed choices about the number and timing of their children, and consequently given families, and especially women, greater control over their lives.

- Women in developing countries are having fewer children — from 6 births per woman in the 1960s to 3.4 today.
- In the 1960s, fewer than 15 per cent of the world's couples were using any method of family planning. The number now stands at 53 per cent.

Population Conferences

In **1974**, the first global intergovernmental conference on population was held in Bucharest and adopted a **World Population Plan of Action** which stressed that:

- Population goals and policies played an integral part in the improvement of the quality of life, the main aim of development;
- Nations had the right to determine their own population policies and could request international support and cooperation in implementing them;
- Couples and individuals had the right to decide freely and responsibly the number and spacing of their children and to have the information, education and means to do so.

In **1984**, ten years after the Bucharest Conference, the World Population Plan of Action was updated at the **International Conference on Population** in Mexico City. Reaffirming the validity of the principles of the 1974 Plan, the 146 States participating in the Conference adopted a further declaration of principle — the **Mexico City Declaration on Population and Development** — in which they stressed the need for:

- An intersectoral approach to population and development, for policies that respected the rights of individuals, couples and families;

- Improvement in the status of women and an increase in their participation in all aspects of development.

In September **1994**, the **International Conference on Population and Development**, held in Cairo, adopted a 20-year Programme of Action which endorsed a new strategy for addressing population issues. Key to the new approach is empowering women through expanded access to education and health services and promoting skill development and employment. The Programme:

- Called for making reproductive health service, including family-planning, universally available by the year 2015 or sooner, as part of a broadened approach to reproductive health and rights;
- Advocated a participatory approach involving Governments, non-governmental organizations, the private sector and local communities in formulating, implementing and monitoring population and development programmes;
- Included goals in regard to education, especially for girls, and for the further reduction of infant, child and maternal-mortality levels;
- For the first time, called on Governments to address unsafe abortion as a leading cause of maternal mortality and a "major public health concern".

THE ENVIRONMENT

The United Nations has played a central role in shaping global action to protect the environment and putting environmental concerns high on the international agenda. The **United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)** — established after the groundbreaking **United Nations Conference on the Human Environment** (Stockholm, 1972) — takes the pulse of the global environment through a wide range of monitoring and research programmes. It also advises Governments and launches grass-roots pilot projects to rehabilitate local environments.

- **Protecting the ozone layer** — UNEP and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) were instrumental in spearheading the 1987 Montreal Protocol, under which Governments have significantly reduced emissions of chemical substances, primarily chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), that are damaging the earth's ozone layer. This effort will spare millions of people from the increased risk of skin cancer caused by ultraviolet radiation.
- **Regulating hazardous wastes** — The Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal, negotiated under UNEP's auspices in 1989, is working to prevent the international dumping or sale of toxic wastes.
- **Preventing overfishing** — The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) monitors marine fishery production and issues alerts to curb overfishing. A 1991 General Assembly resolution banning driftnet fishing has been largely respected. A legal convention to prevent conflicts over fishing rights on the high seas and to conserve fish is currently under negotiation at the UN.
- **Fighting deforestation** — Under the Tropical Forest Action Plan, FAO, UNDP, UNEP and the World Bank have jointly formulated and carried out national plans to promote sustainable forestry in 90 countries, including extensive reforestation.

Continues on page 44 ▶

AN AGENDA FOR DEVELOPMENT

> *Development has to be oriented towards each person. Beyond that must rise a recognition that this human community includes generations yet to come.*
>
> — Boutros Boutros-Ghali, *An Agenda for Development*

Stating that the international community needed a new, compelling vision of the future, the Secretary-General issued in May 1994 ***An Agenda for Development***, a blueprint for a re-energized drive to improve the human condition. The request for such a report, containing recommendations on enhancing the United Nations role in international cooperation for development, had been made by the General Assembly in December 1992.

The Agenda argues that the UN's work in development and decades of effort to reduce poverty, illiteracy, disease and mortality rates are among the great achievements of this century, but, it warns, "development as a common cause is in danger of fading from the forefront of our agenda" in the post-cold-war era.

The Agenda sets out five major and interlinked dimensions of development: peace, economic growth, environmental protection, social justice and democracy. As the report states: "Without peace, human energies cannot be productively employed over time. Without economic growth, there will be a lack of resources to apply to any problem. Without a healthy environment, productivity will devour the basis of human progress. Without societal justice, inequalities will consume the best efforts at positive change. Without political participation in freedom, people will have no voice in shaping their individual and common destiny."

- The reduction of military expenditures is vital. Worldwide, between 1987 and 1992, a cumulative peace dividend of $500 billion was realized — $425 billion in industrial and transitional countries and $75 billion in developing countries.
- However, little of that dividend appears to have been channelled into development. A world of lower military expenditures, reduced military establishments, smaller stocks of weapons and less environmental destruction by military-related activities is not only desirable in itself, but necessary for development.

In the section entitled "The UN in Development", the Secretary-General states that whether expressed as a responsibility of States or as a right of peoples, development requires competent governmental leadership, coherent national policies and strong popular commitment. But few societies, if any, can pursue all aspects of development unaided, and other "actors" were required to assist States in their efforts.

- These actors in development — public and private, national and international — are growing in number and diversity, a situation resulting in a need for greater coherence. The allocation of resources among various dimensions of development remains unbalanced and many activities remain underfinanced.
- There is a need, the report states, to put in place a system of international cooperation that facilitates the mobilization of domestic resources and external assistance, which would include new levels of coordination among UN organs, as well as greater interaction between the policy advice and country

operations of the Bretton Woods institutions — the IMF and the World Bank — and the approaches and practices of other actors in development.

In the concluding section, "The Promise of Development," the Secretary-General states that the United Nations, as a "key mechanism" for international cooperation, possesses flexibility, legitimacy and a universal range of action. However, that mechanism is caught in a confining cycle, caused by a resistance to multilateralism, a reluctance to provide the financial means to achieve agreed ends and an unwillingness to engage in difficult operations. The only way to progress is with a "new and compelling collective vision", he says. [1]

Recommendations — In November 1994, in response to the comments and views regarding the report expressed by Member States, the Secretary-General submitted to the General Assembly a set of ***Recommendations on An Agenda for Development***. The recommendations are based on four broad concepts: that development should be recognized as the foremost task of our time; that it must be seen in its many dimensions — peace, the economy, environmental protection, social justice and democracy; that the emerging consensus on development should be expressed in a new framework for international cooperation; and, within this new framework, that the United Nations must play a major role in both policy leadership and operations.

The recommendations are also far-reaching in scope. Some of them include:

- Development must be driven by national priorities in partnership with government, civil society and private enterprise;
- Developing countries must have access to greater global opportunities in trade, technology, investment and information;
- Official development assistance must be increased and a larger share allocated to the development work of the United Nations;
- The international community should provide more debt relief for countries undertaking economic reforms and additional resources for countries in transition to market economies. The debts of the least developed countries should be cancelled outright;
- Military spending should be further reduced;
- The fiftieth session of the General Assembly should focus on forging a new framework for development cooperation to implement the goals established by the recent series of UN conferences;
- The General Assembly should hold special sessions on major aspects of international cooperation;
- A revitalized ECOSOC should bring specialized agencies into a closer working relationship with the United Nations and identify impending humanitarian emergencies and provide guidelines for coordinated initiatives;
- The United Nations should work more closely with the Bretton Woods institutions;
- UN development efforts must be supported by adequate financial resources in the light of the expanded development mandate of the Organization

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NOTE

1. *An Agenda for Development*, 1995, pp. 74-77, United Nations.

◀ *from page 41*

- **Cleaning up pollution** — In a major effort to address pollution of the Mediterranean Sea, UNEP has encouraged surrounding countries, including adversaries such as Syria and Israel, and Turkey and Greece, to work together to clean up their coastlines. As a result, more than 50 per cent of the previously polluted beaches are now usable, greatly enhancing prospects for revenue-generating tourism.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The Earth Summit — The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, catalyzed a global effort to integrate environmental considerations into economic and social planning in order to achieve "sustainable development", which encompasses, in an integrated way, considerations of economic growth, social progress and equity, protection of the environment and rational use of natural resources.

The Conference, which brought together over 100 heads of State or Government — the largest gathering of world leaders up to that date — adopted three major texts:

- **Agenda 21**, a comprehensive blueprint for global action in all areas of sustainable development, ranging from oceans to atmosphere, agriculture to toxic waste, and including economic and social dimensions, such as combating poverty and changing consumption patterns, as well as delineating the roles of various governmental and non-governmental actors and the means of implementation;
- The **Rio Declaration on Environment and Development**, a series of principles defining the rights and responsibilities of States; and
- The **Rio Forest Principles**, a set of principles to promote the sustainable management, conservation and development of forests worldwide.

Since the Earth Summit, a number of countries and local governments have adopted their own Agenda 21, adapting the general recommendations of UNCED to address their specific situations. By mid-1995, some 75 countries had established national sustainable development commissions or other coordinating bodies to continue the work begun at UNCED.

The **UN Commission on Sustainable Development** meets annually to monitor implementation of the Earth Summit agreements and commitments, and to provide a high-level forum for policy discussion and consensus-building in the field of sustainable development. At its 1995 session, the Commission approved work programmes on consumption and production patterns, elaboration of sustainable development indicators and transfer of environmentally sound technology. A number of useful action-oriented decisions were adopted in such areas as financial resources and mechanisms, integrated approaches to sustainable development of land resources, sustainable mountain development and the phasing out of lead in gasoline. The Commission also set up an Intergovernmental Panel on Forests that will consider ways and means of implementing the Rio Forest Principles and further international understanding and consensus in this area.

In separate but parallel processes, two legally binding conventions were negotiated during the period leading up to the Summit, and were signed by world leaders at Rio:

- The **Framework Convention on Climate Change**, which entered into force in March 1994, by which Governments aim to stabilize atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases at levels that will prevent global warming and related problems; and
- The **Convention on Biological Diversity**, which entered into force in December 1993, and which is intended to ensure effective international action to curb the destruction of biological species, habitats and ecosystems.

The respective monitoring bodies for these Conventions, composed of ratifying countries, are considering strengthening the agreements by possibly adding protocols — for example, in the climate change treaty, to further restrict emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases, and to ensure the safe use of biotechnology under the Biodiversity Convention.

Financing to assist developing countries in protecting their biodiversity and preventing climate change, as well as curbing pollution of international waters and depletion of the ozone layer, has been provided through the **Global Environment Facility**, a fund run jointly by the World Bank, UNDP and UNEP.

More than a third of the Earth's surface is covered by deserts or semi-deserts and another 20 per cent threatened with desertification. In 1977, the **UN Conference on Desertification** put the problem of desertification on the international agenda, demanding immediate and long-term actions to stop desertification and to educate people on the harm done to fragile ecosystems of drylands and the complex relationship between desertification and development.

- The **Convention to Combat Desertification**, called for at UNCED, has been signed by over 100 countries since October 1994. It aims to address the problem of degradation of arid lands which affects the livelihoods of some 900 million people worldwide, especially in Africa. Through the Convention, Governments hope to strengthen programmes to combat desertification by taking a bottom-up approach in working with grass-roots NGOs and by improving coordination of donor and Government agencies. UNEP provides ongoing research and support for desertification activities worldwide.
- A series of severe droughts has affected the Sudano-Sahelian region of Africa since the late 1960s, causing extensive suffering, loss of life and massive population migrations. The droughts had disastrous consequences for the environment and economies of the region, depleting plant species, accelerating land degradation and destroying traditional ways of life through heavy losses of livestock and repeated crop failures. Since 1973, the **UN Sudano-Sahelian Office** has worked to assist African countries in preparing national and local strategies for natural resources management and drought preparedness.

A **Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States** was held in Barbados in 1994, as called for at the Earth Summit. Representatives from over 100 countries approved a Programme of Action to confront the serious environmental and economic problems of small islands, including the threat of possible rising sea levels, vulnerability to a number of natural and economic factors, loss of fragile reefs and rain forests, coastal pollution, shortages of fresh water and import dependency.

- The **UN Convention on the Law of the Sea**, which came into force in 1994, lays down rules for, among other things, the protection and preservation of the marine environment, cooperation in the conduct of marine scientific research and preservation of living resources. (*See Notes, "A Framework for International Law", page 67.*)

FOOD

While overall food production has greatly expanded since 1945, there are still serious problems that cannot be solved by better technology alone. The **World Food Conference**, Rome, 1974, was convened by the UN General Assembly to address a food crisis which saw world food stocks dwindle to alarming levels. The Conference focused international attention on the scale and complexity of world food problems and called for concerted global efforts to deal with them. The Conference also called on the Assembly to establish the **World Food Council (WFC)** and the **International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)** (*see page 35*).

The current world food situation remains critical. According to FAO estimates, some 800 million people are chronically undernourished in the developing world alone and 192 million children under the age of five suffer from protein and energy deficiencies. These problems are particularly acute in food-deficit countries that are unable to import adequate food supplies.

The threat of famine and the persistent rates of malnutrition in poor populations in developing and industrialized countries alike have forced the UN to view the food situation from a variety of angles that require a rethinking of many variables including commodity pricing, rural development, education, agricultural credit and technologies, health, the role of women, poverty, nutritional needs and many others. This multisectoral approach is one of the advantages that the United Nations can contribute to the solution of complex problems.

The **Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)** has taken the lead in promoting strategies to improve global food security. Together with other organizations, FAO has helped devise early warning systems involving satellites and, on the ground, data collection and analysis to identify impending problems before they become critical. The **World Food Programme (WFP)** is on constant alert to take steps to provide emergency food aid and take other preventive measures required to avoid or alleviate dramatic shortages; WFP is also involved in food-for-work and other such programmes contributing directly to long-term development goals. The UN is considering a World Food Summit of world leaders in 1996 to press for greater preparedness for the food crises that may arise in the near future. These efforts will be closely linked to measures to eradicate poverty and foster sustainable development in coordination with the rest of the UN system.

HOUSING

When this century began, only one in ten people lived in cities; when it ends, half of the world's population will be urban dwellers. Our burgeoning cities are rarely able to adjust adequately to all the stresses this accelerating growth entails. Similarly, the neglect of rural areas — and their towns and villages — has only exacerbated rural-urban migration. Since the first Habitat Conference in Vancouver in 1976, the United Nations has moved to address these problems at the international level. It established the **United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS-Habitat)** which, since 1978, has assisted governments in the development and management of their human settlements, in rural as well as urban areas. Currently, Habitat operates over 220 technical cooperation programmes with budgets totalling over $180 million. While Habitat serves as executing agency for less than two per cent of UNDP's overall development assistance resources, over the last five years Habitat projects have consistently resulted in national investment commitments ranging from $1 to $3 billion per year — 20 per cent of the total annual investment commitments related to all UNDP-assisted projects.

Habitat helps to implement the **Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000**, adopted by the General Assembly in 1988, whereby Governments provide a facilitating legal, institutional and regulatory environment that encourages people to undertake the build and improvement of their shelter. The Strategy continues to guide the Centre's work to the year 2000.

Second UN Conference on Human Settlements

As the last in the current series of major United Nations conferences on economic and social issues, the **"City Summit"** — Habitat II, Istanbul, June 1996 — will help shape the development agenda for the twenty-first century by bringing together local authorities, the private sector and other non-governmental actors. Together with Governments, these "partners" will confront their common urban problems by initiating action to improve shelter and living environments. The overall goal of the Conference is to make the world's cities, towns and villages healthy, safe, equitable and sustainable and, to that end, to develop action strategies through partnerships.

EDUCATION AND CULTURE

There has been an explosion of education in the world in recent decades, dramatically affecting literacy levels and the ability of billions of people to participate in an increasingly complex world. As in the area of health, the UN has been in the forefront of combating illiteracy and devising standards and programmes that make education accessible to all. Research and training in science and technology, international law, communications, human rights law, public health, labour law and public administration are central mandates of UN organizations such as the **International Labour Organization (ILO)**, the **UN Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR)**, the **UN Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD)**, and the **United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)**.

The **World Conference on Education for All** (Jomtien, Thailand, 1990) was co-sponsored by UNICEF, UNESCO, UNDP and the World Bank. It set goals on the provisions of basic education including literacy, numeracy, essential life skills for children and steps to end disparities between boys and girls.

UNESCO leads the UN system in its work involving education. It works to eliminate illiteracy worldwide and to spread basic and lifelong education in and out of school. Working on basic principles agreed by Member States, UNESCO emphasizes:

- **The promotion of the free flow of information** — To allow all people to obtain information that is free of censorship and culturally unbiased, UNESCO has provided aid to develop and strengthen communication systems, established news agencies and supported an independent press and, in recent years, helped developing countries to take advantage of computer networking;
- **Improved education in developing countries** — As a direct result of the efforts of UN agencies, over 60 per cent of adults in developing countries can now read and write, and 80 per cent of children in those countries attend school;
- **Improved literacy for women** — Programmes aimed at promoting education and advancement for women helped raise the female literacy rate in developing countries from 36 per cent in 1970 to 56 per cent in 1990;

- **Facilitating academic and cultural exchanges** — The United Nations, through UNESCO and the **United Nations University (UNU)**, have encouraged scholarly and scientific cooperation, networking of institutions and promotion of cultural expressions, including those of minorities and indigenous people. Among UNESCO's many educational, science, cultural, and communications activities, the need to preserve cultural identity, felt especially in many developing countries, has been supported by UNESCO programmes of study of major cultures and has included efforts to preserve and disseminate African oral traditions;
- **Safeguarding and preserving historic cultural and architectural sites** — Ancient monuments in 81 countries, including Greece, Egypt, Italy, Indonesia and Cambodia, have been protected through the efforts of UNESCO and international conventions have been adopted to preserve cultural property; UNESCO led the campaign to save the temples of Nubia in Egypt, which were on sites now covered by the waters of the Aswan Dam. It has launched campaigns to preserve Philae, Venice, Borobudur, Moenjodaro and the Acropolis.

CRIME AND DRUG CONTROL

The **United Nations Office at Vienna (UNOV)** is the headquarters for UN activities in international drug abuse control, crime prevention and criminal justice, peaceful uses of outer space and international trade law.

The United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) serves as the worldwide centre of expertise and information on drug abuse control and helps Member States implement the international drug control treaties.

- **Fighting drug abuse** — UNDCP has worked to reduce demand for illicit drugs and to suppress drug trafficking, and has helped farmers reduce their economic reliance on growing narcotic crops by shifting farm production toward other dependable sources of income.

Drug Control — The control of narcotic drugs has been of global concern ever since the first international conference on the subject was held in Shanghai in 1909. The international control system has been built up step by step, beginning in 1920 under the auspices of the League of Nations and since 1946 by the United Nations.

A series of treaties adopted under United Nations auspices require that Governments exercise control over production and distribution of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, combat drug abuse and illicit traffic, maintain the necessary administrative machinery and report to international organs on their actions. This international regime includes:

- The **Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs**, 1961 (in force since 1964), which codifies earlier treaties on natural or synthetic narcotics, cannabis and cocaine;
- The **Convention on Psychotropic Substances**, 1971 (in force since 1976), which covers hallucinogens, amphetamines, barbiturates, non-barbiturate sedatives and tranquillizers;
- The 1972 **Protocol Amending the Single Convention** (in force since 1975), which highlights the need for treatment and rehabilitation of drug addicts;
- The 1988 **United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances** (in force since 1990), which is designed to deprive drug traffickers of their financial gains and freedom of movement.

Crime — United Nations work in crime prevention and criminal justice aims to prevent and control crime within and among States. The United Nations became involved in the criminal justice field in 1950, and standards written for the treatment of offenders quickly became a widely used yardstick for assessing and improving prison conditions in both developed and developing countries. Later standards promulgated by the UN covered areas such as treatment of juveniles and conduct of police and the judiciary, as well as model treaties on extradition and other forms of international cooperation in criminal justice matters.

Such guidelines have proven to be of vital importance in countries where criminal justice systems have had to be rebuilt very quickly and under duress. They have been utilized to great effect in UN missions to Cambodia, Palestine, El Salvador and Haiti.

- The strengthening of regional and international cooperation in crime prevention, criminal justice, and fighting transnational crime;
- The integration and consolidation of the efforts of Member States in preventing and combating transnational crime;
- More efficient and effective administration of justice, with due respect for the human rights of all those affected by crime and all those involved in the criminal justice system;
- The promotion of the highest standards of fairness, humanity, justice and professional conduct.

To provide a forum on the issues, the General Assembly in 1950 authorized the convening every five years of a **United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders**. The UN Crime Congresses are the primary global forum for presenting and developing criminal justice policies and coordinating international action. These Congresses have taken a leading role in analysing crime and crime prevention as crucial development issues and promoting ideas for appropriate responses. Participants include criminologists, penologists and senior police officers, as well as experts in criminal law, human rights and rehabilitation. Nine such Congresses have been held, from 1955 in Geneva to 1995 in Cairo. The Cairo Congress developed new measures for combating international crime, terrorism, ecological crimes, violence against women, illegal traffic in aliens and corruption of public officials.

STANDARD-SETTING AND OVERSIGHT

Setting standards in health, education, communications, industry and other areas has enhanced the globalization of economic life and cooperation in all fields. The United Nations has contributed significantly to the levels of quality, compatibility and safety of a range of products and services that touch all of us. Similarly, many of its organizations work closely with Governments and industry to monitor the implementation of standards and safeguards.

Improving air and sea travel — The efforts of the **International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)**, which sets international standards and regulations necessary for the safety, security, efficiency and regularity of air transport and serves as the medium for cooperation in all fields of civil aviation among its 183 Contracting States, have contributed to making air travel the safest mode of transportation.

- In 1947, when nine million people travelled, 590 were killed in aircraft accidents; in 1993, the number of deaths was 936 out of 1.2 billion airline passengers.

Over the past two decades, pollution from tankers has been reduced by as much as 60 per cent thanks to the work of the **International Maritime Organization (IMO)**, the UN agency exclusively concerned with safer shipping and cleaner oceans. The IMO has developed treaties dealing with safety at sea, the prevention of collisions, improvement of radio communication and search and rescue procedures.

The **World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)** provides legal and technical assistance to developing countries and countries in transition to market economies, to establish international norms and standards in intellectual property through model laws or international treaties.

- WIPO provides protection for new inventions and maintains a register of nearly three million national trademarks.
- Through treaties, it also protects the works of artists, composers and authors worldwide.
- WIPO's work makes it easier and less costly for individuals and enterprises to enforce their property rights.
- It also broadens the opportunity to distribute new ideas and products without relinquishing control over the property rights.

Although not a specialized agency, the **International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)** is an autonomous intergovernmental organization under the aegis of the UN. IAEA is best known as a forum for scientific and technical cooperation for promoting the peaceful use of nuclear energy. It also helps verify compliance with treaties meant to ensure that nuclear materials are not diverted for military purposes. Some 200 inspections are deployed every year to more than 900 installations worldwide. IAEA safety recommendations are used by countries as a basis for their nuclear standards and rules.

NOTES

1. Address at the Opening of the San Francisco Tenth Anniversary Meetings, San Francisco, 20 June 1955, from: *Public Papers of the Secretaries-General of the United Nations, Vol. II, Dag Hammarskjöld, 1953-1956*, selected and edited with commentary by Andrew W. Cordier and Wilder Foote, p. 516, Columbia University Press, 1972.
2. UNA-USA Global Leadership Award on 29 October 1993.
3. *The World Bank, Annual Report 1994*, Operational and Financial Overview, Fiscal 1990-1994, page 11, Washington D.C., 1994.
4. *Trends in Development Bank Lending 1995*, by Nicolas H. Ludlow and Benjamin C. Pappas, published by Developing Bank Associates, Inc., Washington D.C., 1995.
5. "Human security is the central theme," press release accompanying the *UNDP Human Development Report 1994*.
6. *Fifth Report of the WHO Expert Committee on Tropical Diseases*, World Health Organization, Geneva, 1992.

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HUMAN RIGHTS

> *The set of [human rights] instruments resulting from this standard-setting by the United Nations General Assembly is now our common property. It has enough to satisfy all States, all peoples and all cultures, for the universality it affirms is that of the international community as a whole."*
>
> — UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, Vienna 1993 [1]

One of the great achievements of the United Nations is the creation of a comprehensive body of human rights legislation. It is the United Nations which, for the first time in history, has created a universal code of human rights, one to which all nations can subscribe and to which all people can aspire.

Not only has the Organization painstakingly defined a broad range of internationally accepted rights — including economic, social and cultural, as well as political and civil rights — it has also established effective mechanisms with which to promote and protect these rights and to assist Governments in carrying out their responsibilities.

Since the adoption of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights in 1948, human rights have received an unprecedented level of global attention and support. Women, children, disabled persons, minorities, indigenous peoples, workers and migrants and other vulnerable groups now possess rights that protect them from discriminatory practices that had long been common in many societies. Rights have been aggressively extended through the careful, groundbreaking General Assembly decisions that have gradually established their universality, indivisibility and interrelatedness with development and democratization. Education campaigns have tirelessly informed the world's public of their inalienable rights, while countless national judicial and penal systems have been enhanced with training programmes and technical advice. The UN machinery has acquired a remarkable cohesiveness and weight among Member States. Most recently, the post of the High Commissioner for Human Rights was created to strengthen and coordinate the UN's work for the protection and promotion of all human rights of all persons around the world.

The Early Years

The Covenant of the League of Nations, written at the end of the First World War, was silent on the issue of human rights. But British Prime Minister Winston Churchill had, at the beginning of the Second World War, already described the conflict as one "to establish, on impregnable rocks, the rights of the individual". In 1941, the "four freedoms" were proclaimed as the objective of the Allies: freedom of speech and worship and freedom from want and from fear. The Allies repeated that commitment in the 1941 Atlantic Charter and the 1942 Declaration on the United Nations.

The founders of the United Nations responded to the unprecedented scale of human rights abuses and atrocities during the Second World War by emphasizing human rights in the Organization's Charter. The Charter refers repeatedly to such concepts as "fundamental human rights", "the dignity and worth of the human person", "equal rights", "justice", "social progress", and "fundamental freedoms", and dedicates three chapters to the self-determination of peoples — the right of people everywhere to govern themselves. The Dumbarton Oaks proposals regarding the nature of the United Nations elaborated in the closing days of the war and the earlier drafts of the UN Charter stated only in general terms that the United Nations would "promote respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms". But they fell far short of meeting the expectations of concerned citizens around the world who needed assurances against the repetition of the atrocities of the war.

At the San Francisco Conference in 1945, some 40 non-governmental organizations (NGOs) representing churches, women, trade unions and ethnic organizations joined forces with delegations, mostly from smaller countries, favouring more specific language, some even calling for an international bill of rights in the Charter. This determined lobbying resulted in relatively strong provisions on human rights being incorporated into the Charter, laying the foundation for the post-1945 era of international law-making.

The UN Commission on Human Rights

The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), which makes policy recommendations, convenes international conferences and sets up commissions in the interests of human rights, established the **Commission on Human Rights** in 1946. Under the chairmanship of Eleanor Roosevelt, human rights activist and widow of former US President Franklin Roosevelt, the Commission took up as its first order of business the definition of basic rights and freedoms.

The Commission on Human Rights, the major United Nations body working to promote and protect human rights, provides overall policy guidance, studies human rights problems, develops and codifies new international norms, monitors the observance of human rights around the world and provides advice on human rights institution-building to new or emerging democracies.

Building the Framework

Three years after the UN began work, the General Assembly put into place the first supporting pillar of twentieth-century human rights law.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted on 10 December 1948, was intended as a "common standard of achievement for all peoples". Its 30 articles spell out basic civil and political rights and fundamental economic, social, and cultural rights that human beings in every country should enjoy. The Universal Declaration is generally considered to have the weight of customary international law because it is so widely accepted and used as a yardstick for measuring the conduct of States. Many newly independent countries have cited the Universal Declaration or included its provisions in their basic laws or constitutions.

The broadest legally binding human rights agreements negotiated by the UN are the two **International Covenants** — one on **Economic, Social and Cultural Rights** and the other on **Civil and Political Rights** — the latter with two **Optional Protocols** which deal with recourse procedures and the death penalty. These agreements, adopted in 1966, take the provisions of the Universal Declaration a step further by making them binding upon States parties.

A majority of the world's countries are parties to the two Covenants, thereby opening the door to international monitoring of their human rights practices.

Together, these three instruments are known as the **International Bill of Human Rights** and have served as the inspiration for some 80 conventions and declarations that have been concluded within the UN on a wide range of issues. These include:

- The **Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide** (1948), a direct response to the atrocities of the Second World War, defines genocide as the commission of certain acts with intent to destroy a national, ethnic, racial or religious group;
- The **Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees** (1961) defines the rights and duties of refugees and makes provisions for various aspects of their everyday lives, including their right to work, education, public assistance and social security, and their right to travel documents;
- The **International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination** (1966) is one of the most widely ratified treaties, with 143 States parties as of June 1995. It finds any policy of racial superiority based on racial differences unjustifiable, scientifically false and morally and legally condemnable;
- The **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women** (1979) specifies measures to eliminate discrimination against women with respect to political and public life, nationality, education, employment, health, marriage and the family;
- The **Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion and Belief** (1981) affirms the right of everyone to freedom of thought, conscience and religion and the right not to be subject to discrimination on the grounds of religion or other beliefs. In 1986, a Special Rapporteur was appointed by the Commission on Human Rights to examine incidents and study measures to prevent intolerance based on religion and belief. In 1993, a Special Rapporteur was appointed for the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression;
- The **Convention Against Torture and Other Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment** (1984) defines torture as an international crime, holds States parties accountable for preventing and punishing torture. No exceptional circumstances may be invoked to justify torture, nor may a torturer offer a defence of having acted under orders;
- The **Declaration on the Right to Development** (1986) established that right as "an inalienable human right by virtue of which each person and all peoples are entitled to participate in, contribute to and enjoy economic, social, cultural and political development in which all human rights and fundamental freedoms can be fully realized". And it adds that "equality of opportunity for development is a prerogative both of nations and of individuals";
- The **Convention on the Rights of the Child** (1989) recognizes the particular vulnerability of children and brings together in one comprehensive code benefits and protections for children scattered in scores of other agreements. Special attention is paid to children who are refugees, disabled, or members of minorities. States parties are to provide guarantees for children's survival, development, protection and participation. The Convention is the most broadly ratified treaty with 174

States parties as of June 1995, the UN's goal being universal ratification by the end of 1995.

- The **International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families** (1990) defines basic rights and principles and protects migrant workers, whether legal or illegal, throughout the process of migration. The Convention is not yet in force, because only a very few countries have ratified it to date.
- The **Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities** (1992) proclaims the right of minorities to enjoy their own culture; to profess and practice their own religion; to use their own language; to establish and maintain contacts with other members of their group; and to leave any country, including their own, and to return to their country. The Declaration also calls for action by States to promote and protect these rights.

Several regional agreements, such as the **European Convention on Human Rights**, the **American Convention on Human Rights** and the **African Charter of Human and Peoples Rights**, have been inspired by the Universal Declaration and other UN efforts.

HOW THE UN PROMOTES AND PROTECTS HUMAN RIGHTS

The role and scope of UN action in promoting and protecting human rights have increased in the last several years. But the central mandate remains: to ensure that the ultimate constituents, the "peoples" of the United Nations, in whose name the Charter was written, have their human dignity fully respected. Through the international machinery, the UN has a high profile on several fronts:

As global conscience — The UN has set a pace in establishing minimum standards of acceptable behaviour by nations, and keeping the attention of the international community focused on human rights practices that threaten to undermine those standards. Human rights declarations and conventions are adopted by the General Assembly, underscoring their universality.

As lawmaker — A remarkable codification of international law has taken place. Those rights pertaining to workers, women, children, prisoners and detainees, mentally disabled-persons, as well as violations such as genocide, racial discrimination and torture, have been brought within the international rule of law.

As monitor — The UN has played a central role in ensuring that human rights are not just defined in the abstract, but are put into practice. The International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights and on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966) are among the earliest examples of treaties that empower international bodies to monitor how States live up to their commitments. Treaty bodies, Special Rapporteurs and Working Groups of the Commission on Human Rights each have procedures and mechanisms to monitor compliance with conventions and investigate allegations of human rights abuses. Their resolutions on specific cases carry a moral weight that few Governments are willing to defy.

UN human rights monitors have been dispatched to countries, including El Salvador and Cambodia. (*See page 15.*) Human rights activities formed a crucial part of peace-keeping operations in these countries and included a human rights education programme, general human rights oversight of existing administrative structures in Cambodia and the investigation of alleged human rights abuses. In El Salvador, the United Nations put human rights monitors in place even before a peace accord was reached. In 1995, human rights monitors are working as part of peace-keeping operations in Haiti, Rwanda, Guatemala and the former Yugoslavia.

As forum of appeal — Under the First Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the Convention Against Torture, individual complaints may be brought against States that have accepted the relevant international legal procedures, once all domestic remedies have been exhausted. Also, under procedures established by the **Commission on Human Rights**, the Commission, its Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities and their Working Groups, hear numerous complaints annually submitted by NGOs or individuals.

As the principal intergovernmental policy-making body for human rights at the United Nations, the Commission on Human Rights is authorized to discuss human rights situations anywhere in the world and to examine information from individuals, NGOs, and other sources. By 1995, human rights conditions in more than 70 countries were under examination by the Commission.

As fact-finder — The original mandate of the Commission on Human Rights — to examine situations where massive violations of rights appear to be taking place — has been complemented by a new function: compiling information on the incidence of certain kinds of violations, or violations in a specific country. The mechanisms entrusted with this politically sensitive, humanitarian and sometimes dangerous task are **Special Rapporteurs/Representatives** or **Working Groups.** They gather facts, keep contact with local groups and government authorities, conduct on-site visits when Governments permit, and make recommendations on how human rights institutions might be strengthened.

There are thematic Special Rapporteurs and Working Groups that report on forced or involuntary disappearances, torture, religious intolerance, summary executions, arbitrary detention, freedom of expression, the sale of children, mercenaries, racial discrimination, independence of the judiciary, internally displaced persons, violence against women and the effects of toxic and dangerous products on the enjoyment of human rights. Country-specific Special Rapporteurs/Representatives are currently reporting on Afghanistan, Cuba, Equatorial Guinea, Iran, Iraq, Occupied Arab Territories (including Palestine), Myanmar, Sudan, former Yugoslavia, Zaire, Rwanda, and Burundi. In addition, Mandates have been entrusted to the Secretary-General to prepare reports on Bougainville (part of Papua New Guinea), Cyprus, East Timor, Southern Lebanon and West Bekaa, Togo, Occupied Palestine, Occupied Arab Territories, Occupied Syria and Golan, and Chechnya.

As discreet diplomat — The Commission on Human Rights may ask the Secretary-General to intervene or send an expert to examine a human rights situation with a view to preventing flagrant violations or perhaps even deaths. Such attempts at quiet diplomacy are also undertaken by the Secretary-General in the exercise of his **"good offices"** and may establish the UN's legitimate concern and curb abuses. The Secretary-General, or his special representatives, and the High Commissioner for Human Rights, confidentially raise human rights concerns with Member States, including items such as the release of prisoners, commutation of death sentences and other issues.

As overall coordinator and promoter of human rights at the highest political level — The post of **High Commissioner for Human Rights** was created in 1993 with the intention of strengthening the coordination and impact of UN human rights activities. Appointed for a four-year term, the High Commissioner is charged with promoting and protecting the effective enjoyment by all of all human rights and maintains a permanent dialogue with Member States. His functions include the overall supervision of the Centre for Human Rights. Under the direction and authority of the Secretary-General, the High Commissioner reports on his activities to the Commission on Human Rights and through ECOSOC to the General Assembly. In his work to prevent human rights violations, the High Commissioner is authorized to dialogue with all Governments. Within the UN system, he works to strengthen and streamline the UN human rights machinery to make it more efficient and effective.

As adviser and trainer — The **Centre for Human Rights** provides advisory services to Governments seeking to improve their human rights performance. Assistance may be given to draft a constitution, improve electoral laws, establish or upgrade human rights institutions, prepare new criminal codes, or overhaul the judiciary. As part of the UN Secretariat, the Centre is the focal point for United Nations human rights activities and serves as secretariat for the Commission on Human Rights, the treaty bodies (expert committees monitoring treaty compliance) and other UN human rights organs.

Services and institution-building assistance is provided to Member States at their request. Human rights education and information material is produced by the Centre for Human Rights and the United Nations Department of Public Information. The UN proclaimed the **World Public Information Campaign** in 1988 and the **Decade for Human Rights Education** got under way in 1995.

The Centre for Human Rights provides fellowships and scholarships to qualified persons responsible for promoting and protecting human rights in their countries. It has arranged for candidates to attend courses in regional human rights institutes, such as the International Institute on Human Rights in Strasbourg, France, and the Inter-American Institute of Human Rights in San José, Costa Rica. Regional seminars and training courses organized by the Centre for members of the judiciary, lawyers, police officers, and educators in various countries are aimed at strengthening human rights institutions.

As nerve-centre and hot line — In 1994, the Centre for Human Rights received 105,000 communications from groups and individuals claiming violations of their human rights. On the average, about 100,000 complaints are received per year. In 1989, it received a record number of communications: more than 300,000. The Centre refers these communications to the appropriate UN organs, taking into account the implementation procedures established by conventions and resolutions.

As researcher — The data compiled by the UN on human rights issues is indispensable to the development of human rights law. For example, some 80 country studies provided the basis of an instrument being drafted to protect the rights of indigenous peoples. Another once controversial issue, female genital mutilation, was taken up in the late 1970s and a Special Rapporteur now studies developments in this field. Issues of violence against women are now clearly treated as human rights issues.

The First Human Rights Conference

The 20th anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was commemorated in 1968 as the **International Year for Human Rights**. The major event of the Year, the **International Conference on Human Rights**, held in Teheran, Iran, was the first world-wide governmental conference devoted exclusively to the subject.

The Teheran Conference reviewed progress made since the adoption of the Universal Declaration, evaluated the effectiveness of the Organization's human rights activities, and adopted a programme of action and a Proclamation. Among the initiatives that stemmed from its recommendations were the designation of 1971 as the **International Year for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination**, and the undertaking of a series of studies on the impact on human rights of scientific and technological developments.

The Conference called for measures to ensure the better protection of civilians, prisoners and combatants in all armed conflicts. Later that year, the General Assembly affirmed that parties to an armed conflict must not launch attacks against civilians as such, and should seek to distinguish between combatants and civilians in order to spare the latter as far as possible.

The Conference also cited the right of couples to decide freely the number and spacing of their children, as well as the right to adequate education on the subject, as basic human rights. A five-year study completed by the Commission in 1973 stressed the interrelationship, in the context of national development, between the promotion of family planning and the role and status of women.

The World Conference on Human Rights

The **World Conference on Human Rights** (Vienna, 14 - 25 June 1993) was the first global review of human rights since the International Conference on Human Rights in Teheran in 1968.

The Conference, which was marked by an unprecedented degree of participation by government delegates and the non-governmental human rights community, assessed progress made since the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 and identified obstacles and ways in which they might be overcome.

The Conference demonstrated a growing determination among Member States and human rights NGOs and other activists that the existing body of law be backed up by vigorous operational activities undertaken by the United Nations to ensure that these laws be carried out by Governments. Human rights — in the words of the **Vienna Declaration** adopted at the World Conference — had become the "legitimate concern of the international community". The Vienna Declaration proclaimed that "democracy, development and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms are interdependent and mutually reinforcing".

Paragraph 5, Part I, of the Vienna Declaration states:

> *"All human rights are universal, indivisible and interdependent and interrelated. The international community must treat human rights globally in a fair and equal manner, on the same footing, and with the same emphasis. While the significance of national and regional particularities and various historical, cultural and religious backgrounds must be borne in mind, it is the duty of States, regardless of their political, economic and cultural systems, to promote and protect all human rights and fundamental freedoms."*

In Vienna, it was also clear that the areas of protection had become increasingly specific: preventing genocide, abolishing slavery, combating torture and eliminating all forms of discrimination based on race, sex, religion or belief.

In the same way, the beneficiaries of human rights had become better defined: women's rights, rights of indigenous peoples, protection of refugees, stateless persons, children, physically and mentally disabled persons, protection of detainees and victims of enforced disappearance, protection of the rights of migrant workers and their families.

From the first preparatory meeting, it was clear that steps to strengthen the promotion and protection of human rights raised many difficult issues — such as national sovereignty, universality, the role of NGOs and questions as to the feasibility, viability and impartiality of new or strengthened human rights instruments — yet substantial progress was possible. Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali called the **Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action** "a new vision for global action for human rights into the next century". The declaration, adopted by consensus at the Conference by 171 States, marked historic new steps to promote and protect human rights, particularly those of women, children and indigenous peoples, by:

- Supporting the establishment of a **Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women**;
- Calling for the universal ratification by 1995 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child;
- Recommending that the General Assembly proclaim an international decade of the world's indigenous people and a decade for human rights education, which it did in the following months.

The inextricable relationship of human rights and development was also reaffirmed. As well, the Conference underscored the conviction that respect for human rights is essential to the success of social development initiatives. As Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali said in his opening address to the Vienna Conference:

> *One thing is certain: there can be no sustainable development without promoting democracy and, thus, without respect for human rights. We all know that, on occasion, undemocratic practices and authoritarian policies have marked the first steps taken by some countries along the road to development. Yet, we also know that if these States do not undertake democratic reform once they have begun to experience economic progress, they will ultimately achieve nothing more than disembodied growth, a source of greater inequity and, eventually, social unrest. Democracy alone can give development true meaning.*

APARTHEID AND RACISM

Practically from its inception, the United Nations was involved in the struggle against apartheid, a class of human rights violation that has hardly known any parallel. Condemned by the United Nations in 1966 as a "crime against humanity" incompatible with the Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the issue of apartheid was on the agenda of the General Assembly from 1948 until the end of apartheid in 1994.

When, in October 1994, the newly-elected President of South Africa, Nelson Mandela, addressed the United Nations Assembly, he observed that it was the first time in its 49 years that the Assembly had been addressed by a South African head of state drawn from among the

African majority. Welcoming the vanquishing of apartheid, President Mandela said: "That historic change has come about not least because of the great efforts in which the United Nations engaged to ensure the suppression of the apartheid crime against humanity." [2]

- Among its many censures of South Africa, the General Assembly did not accept its credentials to the Assembly's regular sessions from 1970 through 1974, with the Assembly President noting that this was "tantamount to saying in explicit terms that the General Assembly refuses to allow the delegation of South Africa to participate in its work". Until 1994, South Africa did not participate in the proceedings of the Assembly.
- In November 1977, the Security Council imposed a mandatory arms embargo on South Africa, determining that its aggressions against its neighbours and its potential nuclear capability constituted a threat to international peace and security — the first time the Council has taken such action against a UN Member State.
- In 1985, when the South African Government proclaimed a state of emergency and escalated repression, the international community again reacted strongly, and the Security Council, for the first time, called on Governments to take significant economic measures against South Africa. [3]

Combating Racism

In 1963, the General Assembly adopted the **United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination**. The Declaration affirms the fundamental equality of all persons and confirms that discrimination between human beings on the grounds of race, colour or ethnic origin is a violation of the human rights proclaimed in the Universal Declaration and an obstacle to friendly and peaceful relations among nations and peoples.

Two years later, the General Assembly adopted the **International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination**, which among other provisions authorized the UN to receive complaints from individuals and obliged States parties to adopt concrete legislative, judicial, administrative and other measures to prevent or punish racial discimination.

The General Assembly in 1993 proclaimed the **Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination (1993 - 2003)** and called on all States to take measures to combat new forms of racism, especially through laws, administrative measures, education and information. The Assembly declared that all forms of racism and racial discrimination, including those resulting from official doctrines of racial superiority, such as ethnic cleansing, are among the most serious violations of human rights in the contemporary world and must be combated by all available means. The Assembly drew attention to the plight of migrant workers and their families, children of minorities and indigenous people.

Moreover, in 1993 the Commission on Human Rights appointed a **Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance**, whose mandate is to examine incidents of contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, any form of discrimination against blacks, Arabs and Muslims, xenophobia, anti-semitism, and related intolerance, as well as governmental measures to overcome them. [4]

ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN

The advancement of women has been a focus of the work of the United Nations since its founding 50 years ago, and the establishment of the **Commission on the Status of Women** in 1946 as a special body to deal with women's issues. The UN has been a staunch ally in the struggle to attain universal women's rights and the efforts to ensure that women have equal access to public life and opportunities in all aspects of economic and social development.

In recent years, the UN family of organizations have all undertaken reviews of their work to ensure that women are better integrated into decision-making bodies and considered a central component of their policies and programmes in the field. In addition, steps have been taken to ensure the advancement of women in the work of the Organization itself. [5]

The United Nations has facilitated international guidelines and legislation for the advancement of women, most notably the **Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women** in 1979 and the **Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for Women to the Year 2000**, produced by the third world conference on women in 1985. Both documents continue to be benchmarks in monitoring global progress of women.

Three conferences during the UN-sponsored **International Women's Decade (1976 - 1985)** — Mexico City, 1975; Copenhagen, 1980; and Nairobi, 1985 — greatly enhanced international awareness of the concerns of women and provided the groundwork for invaluable links between the national women's movements and the international community.

Despite clear signs of progress in the areas of education, health and access to employment among others, the Commission on the Status of Women has continued to press its concerns that implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies has been inadequate in many areas. In calling for the **Fourth World Conference on Women** in Beijing (4 - 15 September 1995), the Commission has warned that if societies failed to achieve true gender equality, the costs would include slow economic and diminished social development, misuse of human resources and reduced progress for society as a whole.

Together with Habitat II in 1996, the Beijing Conference marks the culmination of the cycle of major United Nations conferences which, combined with the energy of national women's movements, have galvanized understanding, interest and action concerning the advancement of women around the world. These UN conferences and summits on education, children, the environment, human rights, population and social development have reflected a common concern regarding the pivotal role of women in development and society. The **World Conference on Human Rights**, in particular, achieved a major breakthrough by responding to the worldwide campaign that "women's rights are human rights". The Conference called for the integration of women's human rights in the work of UN human rights bodies. It considered issues of violence against women in public and private life as human rights issues. In a unique international statement, the Conference called for the eradication of any conflicts which may arise between the rights of women and the harmful effects of certain traditional or customary practices, cultural prejudices and religious extremism.

The Preparatory Committee for the Conference has prepared a draft **Programme for Action** for consideration in Beijing which reviews and proposes actions on 12 critical areas of concern regarding women:

- The persistent and increasing burden of poverty on women;
- Unequal access to and inadequate educational opportunities;
- Inequalities in health status, and unequal access to and inadequate health-care services;
- Violence against women;
- Effects of armed or other kinds of conflict on women;
- Inequality in women's access to and participation in the definition of economic structures and policies and the production process itself;
- Inequality between men and women in the sharing of power and decision-making at all levels;
- Insufficient mechanisms at all levels to promote the advancement of women;
- Lack of awareness of, and commitment to, internationally and nationally recognized women's human rights;
- Insufficient mobilization of mass media to promote women's possible contribution to society;
- Lack of adequate recognition and support for women's contribution to managing natural resources and safeguarding the environment;
- The girl child.

The Beijing Conference expects to make concrete proposals on these issues in the hopes of improving implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

In addition to the work done by the UN Secretariat and the specialized agencies and programmes, there are two organizations dedicated exclusively to women: the **UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)** and the **International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW)**. Both were created to support programmes and projects that improve the quality of life for women and are currently in operation in over 100 countries. They include credit and training, access to new food-production technologies and marketing opportunities, and other means of promoting meaningful work for women.

THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN

Millions of children die every year from malnutrition and disease or become victims of slavery, torture and sexual exploitation. The **United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)**, the UN's lead advocate for children, has described the world's children as the "forgotten quarter" of the Earth's people. Their plight, says UNICEF in **The State of the World's Children 1993**, is "no longer acceptable in a world with any claim on civilization". According to UNICEF, child malnutrition, preventable disease and illiteracy could be brought to an end before the year 2000 for $25 billion, significantly less than Europeans spend on wine or Americans on beer.

It is the United Nations that, in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, has provided a standard, a benchmark against which the behaviour of nations can be tenaciously and perpetually measured and improved. Among the measures taken since ratification by Member States:

- Viet Nam has reformed its juvenile justice system;
- Barbados has prohibited the execution of minors;
- Namibia has written portions of the Convention into its Constitution;
- Bangladesh has made schooling compulsory for girls; [6]

In terms of child labour, the goals of the United Nations are to protect working children from exploitation and hazardous conditions that endanger their physical and mental development, to ensure children's access to at least minimum levels of education, nutrition and health care, and, over the long term, to achieve the progressive elimination of child labour.

- In 1990, the International Labour Organization (ILO) launched a major global offensive by establishing the **International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC)**. Upon the request of individuals, the programme provides technical advisory services focusing on the worst abuses: hazardous work, forced labour, street children, girls and the employment of children who are less than 13 years old.
- In 1992, the General Assembly urged Governments and the Commission on Human Rights to take action on the problem of street children, who are increasingly involved in and affected by serious crime, drug abuse, violence and prostitution.
- The **Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities** has called for steps to halt the recruitment or conscription of children into armed forces.
- The Commission on Human Rights has appointed a **Special Rapporteur on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography and the Use of Adoption for Commercial Purposes**.

INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

The United Nations has increasingly taken up the cause of indigenous people, who are considered among the world's most disadvantaged groups. Excluded from the decision-making process, many have been marginalized, exploited, assimilated and subjected to repression, torture and murder when they speak out in defence of their rights. Fearing persecution, they often become refugees and other times they try to mask their identity, abandoning their languages and traditional customs and clothing.

> **Working Definition:** *Indigenous communities, peoples and nations are those which, having a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories, consider themselves distinct from other sectors of the societies now prevailing in those territories, or parts of them.* [7]

- Indigenous people are also called "first peoples", tribal peoples, aboriginals and autochthons. There are at least 5,000 indigenous groups made up of 300 million people, that live in more than 70 countries on five continents.

In 1982, the Subcommission of the Commission on Human Rights established a Working Group on Indigenous Populations which prepared a draft **Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples** for eventual adoption by the Commission on Human Rights, ECOSOC and the General Assembly. The draft was approved by the Subcommission in 1994, and in 1995 the Commission on Human Rights established a Working Group to consider the draft further.

The **1992 Earth Summit** heard the collective voice of indigenous peoples as they expressed their concerns about the deteriorating state of their lands and the environment. UNDP, UNICEF, IFAD, UNESCO and WHO all have programmes directed at specific indigenous groups working to improve health literacy and combat environmental degradation of their native lands.

At the conclusion of the **International Year of the World's Indigenous People (1993)**, the Assembly proclaimed an **International Decade of the World's Indigenous People (1994 - 2004)**.

DISABLED PERSONS

> *Persons with disabilities challenge the world community to grow — to build emotional, intellectual and practical bases for a society which advances the freedoms, addresses the needs and facilitates the contributions of all peoples.*
>
> — Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, International Day of Disabled Persons, 2 December 1994. [8]

More than 500 million persons — 10 per cent of the world's population, an estimated 80 per cent of them living in the developing world — suffer from some type of physical, mental or sensory impairment.

- Disabled persons are often denied basic educational opportunities as children and, as adults, are often given menial or poorly paid jobs.
- Physical restrictions often bar them from public buildings and transport.
- Social attitudes exclude them from cultural life and normal social relationships.
- Prejudice and ignorance lead to unnecessary institutionalization.
- Society also suffers, since the loss of their enormous potential as human beings impoverishes humankind.

The rights of disabled persons do not appear in any single formal listing but are scattered throughout court rulings, ILO recommendations, and a number of legal instruments. Thus they find themselves at a legal disadvantage in relation to other vulnerable groups such as refugees and migrant workers.

The **International Year of Disabled Persons (1981)** saw adoption of a **World Programme of Action Concerning Disabled Persons**, the primary statement of principles for disabled persons, and led to the **UN Decade of Disabled Persons (1983-1992)**. Two monitoring exercises during the Decade, in 1987 and in 1992, acknowledged that despite many efforts, disabled persons continued to be denied equal opportunities and in many societies remained isolated.

It is the United Nations, calling for global "equalization of opportunity " for persons with disabilities, that prompted cities and towns throughout the world to provide such seemingly simple, basic, and obvious services as access ramps and sidewalk indentations for the convenience of the disabled people. [9]

Eleven years in the making, a new set of standards for the protection of people with mental illness was adopted by the General Assembly in 1991. The standards cover a wide range of issues and rights, and state, among other things, that:

- Determination of mental illness should never be made on the basis of political, economic or social status; membership of a cultural, racial or religious group; or any other reason not directly relevant to mental health status;
- Physical restraint or involuntary seclusion should not be used, except as the only means available to prevent immediate harm to the patient or others;
- Sterilization should never be a treatment for mental illness;
- Psychosurgery and other intrusive and irreversible treatments should not be carried out involuntarily;
- Every effort should be made to avoid involuntary hospitalization.

In 1994, the General Assembly endorsed a long-term strategy to further the implementation of the **World Programme of Action Concerning Disabled Persons**. The strategy set as its ultimate goal "a society for all", encompassing human diversity and the development of the human potential of each person.

MIGRANT WORKERS

With increasing movement of people across international frontiers in search of work, a new human rights convention was approved to discourage discrimination against migrant workers. In 1990, following 10 years of negotiations, the **International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families** was adopted by the General Assembly.

- The Convention makes it illegal to expel migrant workers on a collective basis or to destroy their identity documents, work permits or passports.
- It also states, among other things, that migrant workers are entitled to receive the same remuneration, social benefits and medical care as nationals; to join or take part in meetings of trade unions; and, upon ending their employment, to transfer earnings, savings and personal belongings.
- Children of migrant workers have the right to registration of birth and nationality and of access to education.

Some countries have expressed reservations about the document, stating that certain provisions could interfere with local administration of justice, infringe on the rights of nationals because of competition from migrant workers or cause problems for immigration policies and labour supply. As of June 1995, the Convention had not yet acquired the necessary number of ratifications (20) to enter into force.

The World Conference on Human Rights (1993) also addressed the issue of migrant workers as one of several "vulnerable groups" requiring special attention.

FUTURE PRIORITIES

Although human rights continue to be widely violated around the globe, international legal instruments and mechanisms do already exist to bring violations to light, to promote a global culture of human rights through education and awareness and to encourage greater compliance with internationally accepted standards.

In 1994, the appointment of the first **UN High Commissioner for Human Rights** and the proclamation of the **Decade for Human Rights Education**, the **Decade of the World's Indigenous People**, and the **Decade against Racism** (proclaimed in 1993) provided further impetus to the goal of realization of human rights for all.

Thanks to the UN, respect for human rights is increasingly seen as essential to social and economic progress and development and democracy. Yet, in today's world, such fundamental rights as an individual's life, liberty, and physical security, the right to health, housing and work, as well as cultural rights, continue to be threatened by forces of repression, ethnic hatred and exploitation.

Abuses of various kinds abound, from summary executions and cruel and unusual punishment for seemingly minor crimes to spousal and child abuse and blatant social injustice. Blatant violations have led to the disruption of societies and ethnic, religious and other conflicts. Displacement of people causes family disruption, homelessness, increased impoverishment and misery.

In the face of these challenges, the UN has constantly strengthened its work. Since the World Conference in Vienna, it has increased the capacity of the Centre for Human Rights to respond to escalating requests for assistance; created the post of High Commissioner for Human Rights with expanded authority to intervene in cases of massive human rights' violations; stepped up its global information campaign to raise awareness of fundamental rights among the public at large; pressed for the identification and prosecution of government and military officials who sanction violations; and stepped up support for vulnerable groups, such as indigenous peoples, to organize for their rights on an international scale.

This work goes beyond the best-known cases of the daily headlines. It goes beyond the extreme violations that characterize the dramatic social and military upheavals in scores of countries around the world. The UN's work helps all of us in our daily lives, in the workplace, schools and in our homes and communities and places of worship. It protects migrants in strange lands and societies seeking to enjoy the fruits of economic development; it touches us in defending the richness of culture, language, free communication that are so often threatened by intolerance and racism.

The challenge for the United Nations and its Member States is to work together to strengthen the commitments to promoting and protecting the economic, social and cultural rights, as well as the civil and political rights of people everywhere.

NOTES

1. World Conference on Human Rights, *The Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action*, June 1993, *DPI/1394/Rev.1/HR*, April 1995, p. 12.
2. Address by President Nelson Mandela of South Africa to the 49th session of the General Assembly, *A/49/PV.14*, 3 October 1994.
3. UN Security Council resolution *S/RES/569*, 26 July 1985.

4. UN General Assembly document *A/49/677, paragraph 8.*
5. For a more detailed overview of the UN's work for the advancement of women, see *Notes for Speakers on the Advancement of Women*, DPI/1674/WOM/CON, April 1995.
6. *The Progress of Nations*, UNICEF, p. 37.
7. From a study conducted by human rights Special Rapporteur Jose R. Martínez Cobo, 1971 to 1984, UN document *E/CN.4/Sub.2/1986/7/Add.4.*
8. DPI *Press release SG/SM/5501*, 2 December 1994.
9. *World Programme of Action Concerning Disabled Persons, DPI/933/Rev.1*, p. 35, paragraph 115.

A FRAMEWORK FOR INTERNATIONAL LAW

> *The world of order and justice towards which we are striving can be built only on firm foundations of international law.*
>
> —Dag Hammarskjöld, Secretary-General of the United Nations (1953 - 1961)

More international law has been developed through the United Nations system in the past five decades than in the entire previous history of humankind. The impressive body of human rights law, outlined in this chapter, represents only a fraction of the international agreements negotiated under the auspices of the United Nations.

The United Nations has secured the conclusion of more than 465 multilateral agreements covering virtually every area of State interaction and human endeavour — from the law of the sea to narcotic drug control, from the environment to international trade to the advancement of women, from arms control to copyrights.

The legislation regarding economic development, the uses of outer space, transport, crime prevention and criminal justice, disarmament and refugees has an enormous impact on our ability to settle conflicts and resolve problems that affect everyone.

The United Nations has also set universal standards on issues as diverse as disarmament, consumer products and airline safety (*see page 49.*) Such standards have often been incorporated into national laws, and thus made mandatory in the States that accept them.

The United Nations is the only global institution which allows all States to participate, without discrimination, in the many aspects of developing and codifying international law. The development of international law to the extent we have today would not have been possible outside the framework of the United Nations. In new areas of global concern, such as the environment, outer space, migrant labour, drug trafficking and terrorism, its work has been pioneering, and requires concerted efforts that only the United Nations can mobilize.

The United Nations provides the forum and the machinery for starting, negotiating and concluding treaties and conventions. It also promotes the settlement through international law of differences between States. Its main judicial organ, the **International Court of Justice**, plays a central role in this regard. (*See page 10.*)

The Court has the main function of deciding, in accordance with international law, legal disputes submitted to it by States. States appearing before the Court undertake to comply with its judgments.

The Court, based in The Hague, the Netherlands, consists of 15 Judges, elected by the General Assembly and the Security Council, who serve for a nine-year term.

Over the years, the Court has settled disputes between States regarding their common borders; it has defined delimitation of territorial waters, fishing jurisdiction, the right of passage over foreign territory, decolonization questions, military disputes, questions of nationality and the right of asylum.

Most of the disputes brought before the Court have been effectively resolved through its decisions. The Court has thus made a major contribution to the affirmation of international law in relations among nations.

The **Convention on the Law of the Sea**, finalized after 36 years in 1994, is the world's most important achievement in developing international maritime law. The 1982 UN Convention seeks to ensure the peaceful use of the sea by all nations. Because the oceans involve so many aspects of international life, the treaty is perhaps the most sweeping act of international rule-making since the founding of the United Nations.

The treaty covers almost all ocean space and its uses — navigation and overflight, resource exploration and exploitation (including deep-sea-bed mining), conservation and pollution, fishing and shipping. Its 320 articles and nine annexes guide States' behaviour in the world's oceans, defining maritime zones, laying down rules for drawing boundaries, assigning duties and responsibilities, and providing machinery for settling disputes.

The Convention strikes an important balance between the use of the ocean and environmental protection. It devotes an entire section to the protection of the marine environment — the first comprehensive statement of international law on the issue.

Through national and international legislation, States have consistently asserted the authority of the Convention as the pre-eminent international legal instrument on the subject. Many countries have incorporated provisions of the Convention into their national legislation.

The **International Law Commission**, set up in 1947, works to encourage the development of international law and its codification. It is made up of 34 experts in international law, from all of the world's legal systems, working in their personal capacity.

The Commission prepares drafts of treaties through research and negotiation. When a draft treaty is completed, the General Assembly usually convenes an international conference to incorporate the draft articles into a convention, which is then opened to States to become parties.

- Two conferences in 1961 and 1963 approved the **Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations** and the **Vienna Convention on Consular Relations**, which constitute the cornerstone on which day-to-day relations between States are based.
- A conference in 1968 and 1969 approved the **Convention on the Law of Treaties**, which is fundamental to public international law.
- A conference in 1977 and 1978 completed and adopted the **Vienna Convention on Succession of States in Respect of Treaties**.

Differences in national laws relating to international trade often restrict the flow of trade. The **United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL)**, set up in 1966 in Vienna, works to improve the complementarity of potentially conflicting legislation and to further the harmonization and unification of international trade law.

Made up of 36 Member States elected for six-year terms, UNCITRAL has brought about major treaties.

- The 1980 United Nations Convention on **Contracts for the International Sale of Goods** establishes legal rules governing the formation of contracts for the international sale of goods, the obligations of the buyer and seller, remedies for breach of contract, and many other aspects of a contract.
- The 1988 United Nations **Convention on International Bills of Exchange and International Promissory Notes** provides international instruments for use by parties to international commercial transactions.

- The widely used UNCITRAL Arbitration Rules provide a set of procedural rules under which parties may agree to conduct arbitral proceedings in case of disagreement in their commercial relations.

The global dimension of environmental problems has brought about several environmental treaties addressing such problems. The **United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)** has helped bring about many of these treaties. (*See page 41.*)

- The **Vienna Convention** (1983), the **Montreal Protocol** (1987) and the **London Amendment to the Montreal Protocol** (1990) seek to reduce damage to the earth's ozone layer, which shields life on earth from the sun's harmful ultraviolet radiations.
- The **Basel Convention on the Transboundary Movement of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal** (1989) reduces the dangers of pollution from toxic wastes.
- The **Convention on International Trade of Endangered Species** (1973) is universally recognized for its achievements in controlling the trade in wildlife products.
- The **Convention on Biological Diversity** (1992) seeks to halt the destruction of species, habitats and ecosystems.
- The **Framework Convention on Climate Change** (1992) obligates States parties to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases causing global warming and related atmospheric problems.

These are but a few glimpses of the achievements of the United Nations system in international law. Many other treaties promoted by the United Nations have a global impact and help to improve our daily lives.

- The 1988 **United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances** is the key international treaty against drug trafficking. (*See page 48.*)
- The 1979 **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)** is the main legal instrument to further women's equality. (*See page 60.*)

The specialized agencies of the United Nations have played a major role in developing this body of law.

- The **International Labour Organization** (ILO) has developed more than 350 conventions and recommendations on labour matters.
- Air traffic the world over is safer thanks to rules and regulations agreed upon under the auspices of the **International Civil Aviation Organization** (ICAO).
- The **International Maritime Organization** (IMO) has developed several conventions on many aspects of navigation and shipping.
- The **World Intellectual Property Organization** (WIPO) works to protect intellectual property and copyright throughout the world.

THE UNITED NATIONS AT 50: THE ACHIEVEMENTS

The United Nations has been engaged in a vast array of work that touches every aspect of people's lives around the world, often in ways unknown to the average citizen. In addition to its role as a peace-keeper and forum for conflict resolution, the United Nations and its family of agencies dedicate the majority of staff and financial resources to the quiet but steady work of social and economic development which has always been seen as fundamental to the mandate of the Charter of the United Nations. Its contribution to standard-setting and international law has had a far-reaching and long-lasting impact on all of us.

Here, in brief, is a sampling of what the United Nations system has accomplished since 1945 when the world Organization was founded.

1. **Maintaining peace and security** — By deploying more than 35 peace-keeping forces and observer missions since 1948, the United Nations has been able to restore calm to allow negotiations to proceed while saving millions of people from becoming casualties of conflicts. There are currently 16 active peace-keeping forces in operation.

2. **Making peace** — Since 1945, the United Nations has been credited with negotiating numerous peaceful settlements that have ended regional conflicts (*see page 12.*) and averted many more. Recent cases include an end to the Iran-Iraq war, the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan and an end to the civil war in El Salvador.

3. **Building international law** — Over 300 international treaties, on topics that vary from human rights to the use of outer space and the seabed, have been enacted through the efforts of the United Nations. (*See A Framework for International Law, page 67.*)

4. **Promoting democracy** — The United Nations has assisted citizens in over 45 countries to participate in free and fair elections, including those held in Cambodia, El Salvador, Eritrea, Mozambique, Namibia, Nicaragua and South Africa. It has provided electoral advice, assistance and monitoring of results, as well as help in drafting national constitutions.

5. **Promoting development** — The UN system has devoted enormous attention and resources to economic and social development, particularly the promotion of human skills and potentials. The system's annual disbursements, including loans and grants, amount to more than $10 billion. The UN Development Programme (UNDP), in close cooperation with over 170 Member States and other UN agencies, designs and implements projects for agriculture, industry, education and the environment. It supports thousands of programmes and projects, with an annual budget of $1.3 billion, and is the largest multilateral source of grant development assistance. The World Bank is also at the forefront in mobilizing support for developing countries worldwide.

6. **Promoting human rights** — Since adopting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, the United Nations has helped negotiate more than 80 comprehensive agreements on political, civil, economic, social and cultural rights. By investigating individual complaints of human rights abuses, the UN Commission on Human Rights has focused world attention on cases of torture, disappearance and arbitrary detention and has generated international pressure to be brought on Governments to improve their human rights records.

7. **Protecting the environment** — The United Nations has played a vital role in creating global programmes to protect the environment. At the "Earth Summit", the UN Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, all countries adopted "Agenda 21", a blueprint to promote sustainable development, the concept of promoting economic growth while protecting natural resources for generations to come. (*See page 41.*)

8. **Preventing nuclear proliferation** — The United Nations, through the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), has helped minimize the threat of a nuclear war through regular inspection of nuclear reactors in 90 countries to ensure that nuclear materials are not diverted for military purposes.

9. **Promoting self-determination and independence** — The United Nations has played a crucial role in encouraging the historic process of decolonization, which led to the independence of more than 80 countries.

10. **Settlement of major international disputes** — By giving judgments and advisory opinions, the International Court of Justice has helped settle international disputes involving territorial issues, non-interference in the internal affairs of States, diplomatic relations, hostage-taking, the right of asylum, rights of passage and economic rights.

11. **Helping to end apartheid in South Africa** — By imposing measures ranging from an arms embargo to a convention against segregated sporting events, the United Nations was a major factor in bringing about the end of the apartheid system, which the General Assembly called "a crime against humanity". The United Nations observed elections in April 1994 in which all South Africans participated on an equal basis. *(See page 58.)*

12. **Providing humanitarian aid to victims of conflict** — Since 1951, tens of millions of refugees fleeing war, famine or persecution have received international protection and assistance from the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in close cooperation with other agencies. More than 27 million people, including refugees and others in a similar situation, returnees and some groups of internally displaced persons, one of concern to UNHCR. Many of them require material assistance, including emergency aid as a result of major crises; care and maintenance that meet their basic needs; voluntary repatriation; local settlement assistance to promote self-sufficiency and local integration in host countries; and resettlement in third countries for refugees who cannot return to their homes and who face particular protection problems in their country of first asylum.

13. **Aiding Palestinian refugees** — Since 1950, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) has sustained four generations of Palestinians with schooling, essential health care, relief assistance and key social services virtually without interruption. There are 2.9 million refugees in the Middle East served by UNRWA.

14. **Enhancing agricultural production** — The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has provided research, technical assistance and funding for thousands of projects that have improved crop production and income earnings among small farmers.

15. **Alleviating chronic hunger and rural poverty in developing countries** — The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) has developed a system of providing credit, often in very small amounts, for the poorest and most marginalized groups that has benefitted over 230 million people in nearly 100 developing countries. The World Food Programme (WFP) provides one fourth of all food aid shipped globally. *(See page 28.)*

16. **Focusing on African development** — For the United Nations, Africa continues to be one of its highest priorities. In 1986, the United Nations convened a special session of the General Assembly to marshal international support for African economic recovery and development. The United Nations also has instituted a system-wide task force to ensure that commitments made by the international community are honoured and challenges met. *(See page 37.)*

17. **Promoting women's rights** — A long-term objective of the United Nations has been to improve the status of women through human rights legislation and policies that fully integrate women into the development process. Since 1975, with the first women's conference and the beginning of the UN-sponsored International Women's Decade, the United Nations has helped to set an agenda for the advancement of women and women's rights for the rest of the century. *(See page 60.)*

18. Providing safe drinking water — UN agencies have worked with Governments and NGOs to make safe drinking water available to 1.3 billion people in rural areas during the last decade.

19. Eradicating smallpox — A 13-year effort by the World Health Organization (WHO) resulted in the global eradication of smallpox in 1980. The eradication has saved an estimated $1 billion annually in vaccination and monitoring, almost three times the cost of eliminating the scourge itself. WHO also helped wipe out polio from the Western hemisphere, with global eradication expected by the year 2000. That year is also the target for the eradication of dracunculiasis (guinea-worm disease), and the elimination of leprosy and neonatal tetanus.

20. Pressing for universal immunization — Polio, tetanus, measles, whooping cough, diphtheria and tuberculosis still kill more than 8 million children each year. In 1974, only 5 per cent of children in developing countries were immunized against these diseases. Today, as a result of the efforts led by UNICEF and WHO, 80 per cent of children are immunized, saving the lives of more than 3 million children each year.

21. Reducing child mortality rates — Through health and nutrition programmes, such as childhood immunization, oral rehydration therapy and salt iodization, as well as initiatives to provide safe water and sanitation, UN agencies have helped halve the child mortality rate in developing countries since 1960 and increase the average life expectancy from 37 to 67 years.

22. Fighting parasitic diseases — Efforts by UN agencies in North Africa to eliminate the dreaded screw worm, a parasite that feeds on human and animal flesh, prevented the spread of the parasite to Egypt, Tunisia, sub-Saharan Africa and Europe. UN agency programmes have also saved 7 million children from the ravages of river blindness and rescued millions more from dracunculiasis (guinea-worm disease) and other tropical diseases.

23. Promoting investment in developing countries — The UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) has served as a "matchmaker" for North-South, South-South and East-West investment, promoting entrepreneurship and self-reliance, industrial cooperation and technology transfer and cost-effective, ecologically sensitive industry.

24. Orienting economic policy towards social need — Many UN agencies have emphasized the need to take into account human needs in determining economic adjustment and restructuring policies and aid allocations, supporting policies to ensure basic social programmes to combat poverty, especially in the areas of health and education, "debt swaps for children" and debt relief.

25. Reducing the effects of natural disasters — The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) has helped millions of people to avoid the calamitous effects of both natural and man-made disasters. Its early-warning system, which utilizes thousands of surface monitors as well as satellites, has provided information for the dispersal of oil spills and has predicted long-term droughts. The system has helped to improve the distribution of food aid to drought regions, such as southern Africa in 1992.

26. Providing food to victims of emergencies — Over 2 million tons of food are distributed each year by the World Food Programme (WFP). Nearly 30 million people facing acute food shortages in 36 countries benefited from this assistance in 1994.

27. Clearing land-mines — The United Nations is leading an international effort to clear land-mines from former battlefields in Afghanistan, Angola, Cambodia, El Salvador, Mozambique, Rwanda and Somalia that still kill and maim thousands of innocent people every year. (*See page 30.*)

28. Protecting the ozone layer — The UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and the WMO have been instrumental in highlighting the damage caused to the earth's ozone layer. As a result of a treaty, known as the Montreal Protocol, there has been a global effort to reduce chemical emissions of substances that have caused the depletion of the ozone layer.

29. Curbing global warming — Through the Global Environment Facility, countries have contributed substantial resources to help developing countries curb conditions that cause global warming. Increasing emissions from burning fossil fuels and changes in land-use patterns have led to a build-up of gases in the atmosphere, which experts believe can lead to a warming of the Earth's temperature.

30. Preventing overfishing — FAO monitors marine fishery production and issues alerts to prevent damage due to overfishing.

31. Limiting deforestation and promoting sustainable forestry development — FAO, UNDP and the World Bank, through a Tropical Forests Action Programme, have formulated and carried out forestry actions plans in 90 countries.

32. Cleaning up pollution — UNEP led a major effort to clean up the Mediterranean Sea. As a result, more than 50 per cent of the previously polluted beaches are now usable.

33. Protecting consumers' health — To ensure the safety of food sold in the market-place, UN agencies have established standards for over 200 food commodities and safety limits for more than 3,000 food contaminants.

34. Ensuring reproductive choice — The UN Population Fund (UNFPA), through its support to family-planning programmes, has enabled people to make informed choices, and consequently given families, and especially women, greater control over their lives. Partly as a result of these campaigns, women in developing countries are having fewer children — from 6 births per woman in the 1960s to 3.4 today. In the 1960s, fewer than 15 per cent of the world's couples were using any method of family planning. The number now stands at 53 per cent.

35. Fighting drug abuse — The UN International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) has worked to reduce demand for illicit drugs and to suppress drug trafficking and has helped farmers to reduce their economic reliance on growing narcotic crops by shifting farm production towards other dependable sources of income.

36. Improving global trade relations — The UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) has worked to obtain special trade preferences for developing countries to export their products to developed countries. It has also negotiated international commodities agreements to ensure fair prices for developing countries. Through the International Trade Centre (ITC), and other services, it is helping developing countries to compete more effectively in the world market-place.

37. Promoting economic reform — Together with the World Bank and the IMF, the United Nations has helped many countries improve their economic management, offered training for government finance officials and provided financial assistance to countries experiencing temporary balance-of-payments difficulties.

38. Promoting worker rights — The International Labour Organization (ILO) has worked to develop widely recognized conventions to guarantee the right to freedom of association, the right to organize, to collective bargaining, and the rights of indigenous and tribal peoples, has promoted employment and equal remuneration and has sought to eliminate discrimination and child labour. Moreover, by setting safety standards, the ILO has helped reduce the toll of work-related accidents.

39. Promoting peaceful development of the world's oceans — Through three international conferences, the United Nations has spearheaded an international effort to promote a comprehensive global agreement for the protection, preservation and peaceful development of the oceans. The UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, which came into force in 1994, lays down rules for the determination of national maritime jurisdiction, navigation on the high seas, rights and duties of coastal and other States, the obligation to protect and preserve the marine environment, cooperation in the conduct of marine scientific research and preservation of living resources.

40. Improving air and sea travel — UN agencies have been responsible for setting safety standards for sea and air travel. The efforts of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) have contributed to making air travel the safest mode of transportation. In 1947, when 9 million people travelled by air, 590 were killed in aircraft accidents; in 1993 the number of deaths was 936 out of the 1.2 billion airline passengers. Over the last two decades, pollution spills from tankers have been reduced by as much as 60 per cent thanks to the work of the International Maritime Organization (IMO).

41. Protecting intellectual property — The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) provides protection for new inventions and maintains a register of nearly 3 million national trademarks. Through treaties, it also protects the works of artists, composers and authors worldwide. WIPO's work makes it easier and less costly for individuals and enterprises to enforce their property rights. It also broadens the opportunity to distribute new ideas and products without relinquishing control over the property rights.

42. Promoting the free flow of information — To allow all people to obtain information that is free of censorship and culturally unbiased, UNESCO has provided aid to develop and strengthen communication systems, established news agencies and supported an independent press.

43. Improving global communications — The Universal Postal Union (UPU) has maintained and regulated international mail delivery. The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) has coordinated use of the radio spectrum, promoted cooperation in assigning positions for stationary satellites, and established international standards for communications, thereby ensuring the unfettered flow of information around the globe.

44. Empowering the voiceless — UN-sponsored international years and conferences have led Governments to recognize the needs and contributions of groups usually excluded from decision-making, such as the ageing, children, youth, the homeless and disabled people.

45. Establishing "children as a zone of peace" — In armed conflicts from El Salvador to Lebanon, the Sudan to former Yugoslavia, UNICEF has helped pioneer "Days of tranquillity" for immunization campaigns and the opening of "Corridors of peace" for delivery of humanitarian relief.

46. Generating worldwide commitment in support of the needs of children — Following its unanimous adoption by the UN General Assembly in 1989, the Convention on the Rights of the Child entered into law in 1990. UNICEF and the UN Centre for Human Rights have campaigned for universal ratification of this ground-breaking human rights treaty. That goal is near, with 175 countries ratifying as of the end of June 1995. UNICEF is also supporting more than 150 Governments in their efforts to achieve 27 specific goals for children for the year 2000 agreed on at the World Summit for Children, convened by the UN Secretary-General in 1990.

47. Improving education in developing countries — Largely through the efforts of UN agencies, particularly UNESCO, over 60 per cent of adults in developing countries can now read and write, and 80 per cent of children in these countries attend school.

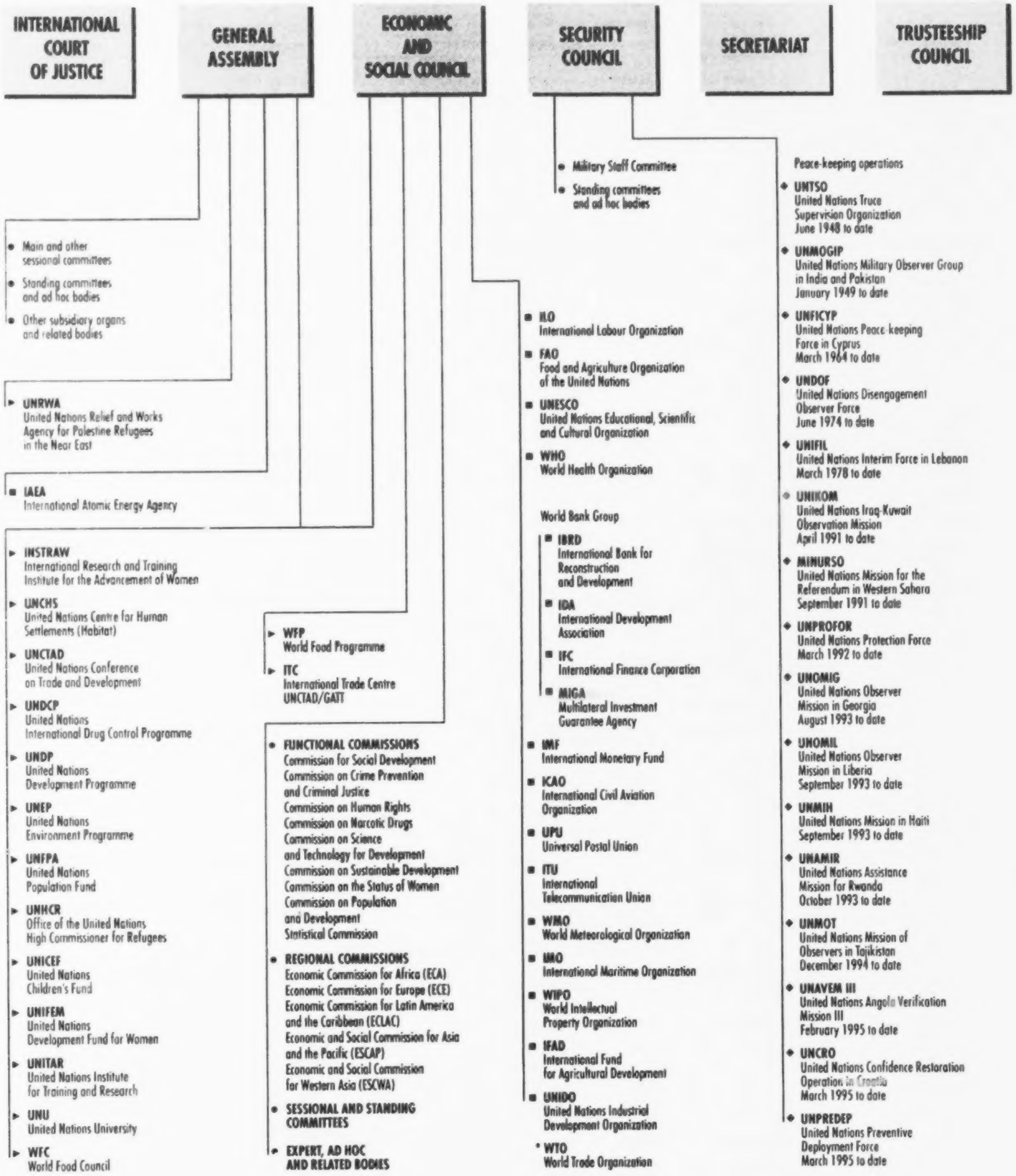
48. Improving literacy for women — Programmes aimed at promoting the education and advancement of women and girls have helped raise female literacy rates in developing countries from 36 per cent in 1970 to 56 per cent in 1990.

49. Safeguarding and preserving historic cultural and architectural sites — Ancient monuments in more than 100 countries, including Greece, Egypt, Italy, Indonesia and Cambodia, have been protected through the efforts of UNESCO, and international conventions have been adopted to preserve cultural property.

50. Facilitating academic and cultural exchanges — The United Nations, through UNESCO and the United Nations University (UNU), has encouraged scholarly and scientific cooperation, networking of institutions and promotion of cultural expressions, including those of minorities and indigenous people.

The UNITED NATIONS system

PRINCIPAL ORGANS OF THE UNITED NATIONS



INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

SECURITY COUNCIL

SECRETARIAT

TRUSTEESHIP COUNCIL

● Main and other sessional committees
● Standing committees and ad hoc bodies
● Other subsidiary organs and related bodies

► **UNRWA**
United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

■ **IAEA**
International Atomic Energy Agency

► **INSTRAW**
International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women

► **UNCHS**
United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat)

► **UNCTAD**
United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

► **UNDCP**
United Nations International Drug Control Programme

► **UNDP**
United Nations Development Programme

► **UNEP**
United Nations Environment Programme

► **UNFPA**
United Nations Population Fund

► **UNHCR**
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

► **UNICEF**
United Nations Children's Fund

► **UNIFEM**
United Nations Development Fund for Women

► **UNITAR**
United Nations Institute for Training and Research

► **UNU**
United Nations University

► **WFC**
World Food Council

► **WFP**
World Food Programme

► **ITC**
International Trade Centre UNCTAD/GATT

● **FUNCTIONAL COMMISSIONS**
Commission for Social Development
Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice
Commission on Human Rights
Commission on Narcotic Drugs
Commission on Science and Technology for Development
Commission on Sustainable Development
Commission on the Status of Women
Commission on Population and Development
Statistical Commission

● **REGIONAL COMMISSIONS**
Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)
Economic Commission for Europe (ECE)
Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)
Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)
Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)

● **SESSIONAL AND STANDING COMMITTEES**

● **EXPERT, AD HOC AND RELATED BODIES**

● Military Staff Committee
● Standing committees and ad hoc bodies

■ **ILO**
International Labour Organization

■ **FAO**
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

■ **UNESCO**
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

■ **WHO**
World Health Organization

World Bank Group

■ **IBRD**
International Bank for Reconstruction and Development

■ **IDA**
International Development Association

■ **IFC**
International Finance Corporation

■ **MIGA**
Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency

■ **IMF**
International Monetary Fund

■ **ICAO**
International Civil Aviation Organization

■ **UPU**
Universal Postal Union

■ **ITU**
International Telecommunication Union

■ **WMO**
World Meteorological Organization

■ **IMO**
International Maritime Organization

■ **WIPO**
World Intellectual Property Organization

■ **IFAD**
International Fund for Agricultural Development

■ **UNIDO**
United Nations Industrial Development Organization

* **WTO**
World Trade Organization

Peace-keeping operations

◆ **UNTSO**
United Nations Truce Supervision Organization
June 1948 to date

◆ **UNMOGIP**
United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan
January 1949 to date

◆ **UNFICYP**
United Nations Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus
March 1964 to date

◆ **UNDOF**
United Nations Disengagement Observer Force
June 1974 to date

◆ **UNIFIL**
United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon
March 1978 to date

◆ **UNIKOM**
United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission
April 1991 to date

◆ **MINURSO**
United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara
September 1991 to date

◆ **UNPROFOR**
United Nations Protection Force
March 1992 to date

◆ **UNOMIG**
United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia
August 1993 to date

◆ **UNOMIL**
United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia
September 1993 to date

◆ **UNMIH**
United Nations Mission in Haiti
September 1993 to date

◆ **UNAMIR**
United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda
October 1993 to date

◆ **UNMOT**
United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan
December 1994 to date

◆ **UNAVEM III**
United Nations Angola Verification Mission III
February 1995 to date

◆ **UNCRO**
United Nations Confidence Restoration Operation in Croatia
March 1995 to date

◆ **UNPREDEP**
United Nations Preventive Deployment Force
March 1995 to date

► United Nations programmes and organs (representative list only)
■ Specialized agencies and other autonomous organizations within the system
● Other commissions, committees and ad hoc and related bodies

* Cooperative arrangements between the UN and the newly established WTO are currently under discussion.

Members of the United Nations

Member State	Date of admission	Scale of assessments (per cent)	Population est. (000)
Afghanistan	19 November 1946	0.01	17,691
Albania	14 December 1955	0.01	3,389
Algeria	8 October 1962	0.16	26,722
Andorra	28 July 1993	0.01	65
Angola	1 December 1976	0.01	10,276
Antigua and Barbuda	11 November 1981	0.01	65
Argentina	24 October 1945	0.48	34,180
Armenia	2 March 1992	0.08	3,732
Australia	1 November 1945	1.46	17,803
Austria	14 December 1955	0.85	8,015
Azerbaijan	2 March 1992	0.16	7,391
Bahamas	18 September 1973	0.02	269
Bahrain	21 September 1971	0.02	539
Bangladesh	17 September 1974	0.01	115,203
Barbados	9 December 1966	0.01	260
Belarus	2 March 1992	0.37	10,188
Belgium	27 December 1945	0.99	10,046
Belize	25 September 1981	0.01	205
Benin	20 September 1960	0.01	5,215
Bhutan	21 September 1971	0.01	1,596
Bolivia	14 November 1945	0.01	7,237
Bosnia and Herzegovina	22 May 1992	0.02	3,707
Botswana	17 October 1966	0.01	1,443
Brazil	24 October 1945	1.62	153,792
Brunei Darussalam	21 September 1984	0.02	274
Bulgaria	14 December 1955	0.10	8,469
Burkina Faso	20 September 1960	0.01	9,889
Burundi	18 September 1962	0.01	5,958
Cambodia	14 December 1955	0.01	9,308
Cameroon	20 September 1960	0.01	12,522
Canada	9 November 1945	3.07	29,248
Cape Verde	16 September 1975	0.01	370
Central African Republic	20 September 1960	0.01	3,156
Chad	20 September 1960	0.01	6,098
Chile	24 October 1945	0.08	14,026
China	24 October 1945	0.72	1,196,360
Colombia	5 November 1945	0.11	34,520
Comoros	12 November 1975	0.01	607
Congo	20 September 1960	0.01	2,443
Costa Rica	2 November 1945	0.01	3,005
Côte d'Ivoire	20 September 1960	0.01	13,316
Croatia	22 May 1992	0.10	4,511
Cuba	24 October 1945	0.07	10,941
Cyprus	20 September 1960	0.03	726

Member State	Date of admission	Scale of assessments (per cent)	Population est. (000)
Czech Republic	19 January 1993	0.32	10,333
Democratic People's Republic of Korea	17 September 1991	0.04	23,048
Denmark	24 October 1945	0.70	5,212
Djibouti	20 September 1977	0.01	557
Dominica	18 December 1978	0.01	71
Dominican Republic	24 October 1945	0.01	7,608
Ecuador	21 December 1945	0.02	11,221
Egypt	24 October 1945	0.07	57,673
El Salvador	24 October 1945	0.01	5,517
Equatorial Guinea	12 November 1968	0.01	379
Eritrea	28 May 1993	0.01	3,345
Estonia	17 September 1991	0.05	1,507
Ethiopia	13 November 1945	0.01	56,900
Federated States of Micronesia	17 September 1991	0.01	105
Fiji	13 October 1970	0.01	771
Finland	14 December 1955	0.61	5,095
France	24 October 1945	6.32	57,850
Gabon	20 September 1960	0.01	1,012
Gambia	21 September 1965	0.01	1,026
Georgia	31 July 1992	0.16	5,471
Germany	18 September 1973	8.94	81,373
Ghana	8 March 1957	0.01	16,446
Greece	25 October 1945	0.37	10,350
Grenada	17 September 1974	0.01	92
Guatemala	21 November 1945	0.02	10,322
Guinea	12 December 1958	0.01	6,306
Guinea-Bissau	17 September 1974	0.01	1,028
Guyana	20 September 1966	0.01	816
Haiti	24 October 1945	0.01	7,041
Honduras	17 December 1945	0.01	5,770
Hungary	14 December 1955	0.01	10,257
Iceland	19 November 1946	0.03	263
India	30 October 1945	0.31	883,910
Indonesia	28 September 1950	0.14	189,136
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	24 October 1945	0.60	60,270
Iraq	21 December 1945	0.14	19,454
Ireland	14 December 1955	0.20	3,571
Israel	11 May 1949	0.26	5,423
Italy	14 December 1955	4.79	57,110
Jamaica	18 September 1962	0.01	2,411
Japan	18 December 1956	13.95	124,536
Jordan	14 December 1955	0.01	4,936
Kazakstan	2 March 1992	0.26	16,925
Kenya	16 December 1963	0.01	28,113

Member State	Date of admission	Scale of assessments (per cent)	Population est. (000)
Kuwait	14 May 1963	0.20	1,433
Kyrgyzstan	2 March 1992	0.04	4,474
Lao People's Democratic Republic	14 December 1955	0.01	4,605
Latvia	17 September 1991	0.10	2,536
Lebanon	24 October 1945	0.01	2,806
Lesotho	17 October 1966	0.01	1,943
Liberia	2 November 1945	0.01	2,640
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	14 December 1955	0.21	4,700
Liechtenstein	18 September 1990	0.01	30
Lithuania	17 September 1991	0.11	3,735
Luxembourg	24 October 1945	0.07	401
Madagascar	20 September 1960	0.01	12,092
Malawi	1 December 1964	0.01	9,135
Malaysia	17 September 1957	0.14	19,047
Maldives	21 September 1965	0.01	238
Mali	28 September 1960	0.01	10,135
Malta	1 December 1964	0.01	366
Marshall Islands	17 September 1991	0.01	52
Mauritania	27 October 1961	0.01	2,161
Mauritius	24 April 1968	0.01	1,098
Mexico	7 November 1945	0.78	87,341
Monaco	28 May 1993	0.01	31
Mongolia	27 October 1961	0.01	2,318
Morocco	12 November 1956	0.03	26,069
Mozambique	16 September 1975	0.01	15,583
Myanmar	19 April 1948	0.01	44,596
Namibia	23 April 1990	0.01	1,461
Nepal	14 December 1955	0.01	20,812
Netherlands	10 December 1945	1.58	15,385
New Zealand	24 October 1945	0.24	3,493
Nicaragua	24 October 1945	0.01	4,401
Niger	20 September 1960	0.01	8,361
Nigeria	7 October 1960	0.16	105,264
Norway	27 November 1945	0.55	4,331
Oman	7 October 1971	0.04	2,018
Pakistan	30 September 1947	0.06	122,812
Palau	15 December 1994	*	16
Panama	13 November 1945	0.01	2,583
Papua New Guinea	10 October 1975	0.01	3,922
Paraguay	24 October 1945	0.01	4,643
Peru	31 October 1945	0.06	23,088
Philippines	24 October 1945	0.06	65,649
Poland	24 October 1945	0.38	38,554
Portugal	14 December 1955	0.24	9,868
Qatar	21 September 1971	0.04	559
Republic of Korea	17 September 1991	0.80	44,619
Republic of Moldova	2 March 1992	0.11	4,356
Romania	14 December 1955	0.15	22,742
Russian Federation	24 October 1945	5.68	148,366
Rwanda	18 September 1962	0.01	7,554
Saint Kitts and Nevis	23 September 1983	0.01	42
Saint Lucia	18 September 1979	0.01	139
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	16 September 1980	0.01	110
Samoa	15 December 1976	0.01	163
San Marino	2 March 1992	0.01	24
Sao Tome and Principe	16 September 1975	0.01	122
Saudi Arabia	24 October 1945	0.80	17,119
Senegal	28 September 1960	0.01	8,152
Seychelles	21 September 1976	0.01	72
Sierra Leone	27 September 1961	0.01	4,297
Singapore	21 September 1965	0.14	2,930
Slovak Republic	19 January 1993	0.10	5,353
Slovenia	22 May 1992	0.07	1,988
Solomon Islands	19 September 1978	0.01	355
Somalia	20 September 1960	0.01	8,954
South Africa	7 November 1945	0.34	40,435
Spain	14 December 1955	2.24	39,167
Sri Lanka	14 December 1955	0.01	17,619
Sudan	12 November 1956	0.01	24,941
Suriname	4 December 1975	0.01	414
Swaziland	24 September 1968	0.01	809
Sweden	19 November 1946	1.22	8,801
Syrian Arab Republic	24 October 1945	0.05	13,844
Tajikistan	2 March 1992	0.03	5,638
Thailand	16 December 1946	0.13	58,584
The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	8 April 1993	0.01	2,083
Togo	20 September 1960	0.01	3,885
Trinidad and Tobago	18 September 1962	0.04	1,260
Tunisia	12 November 1956	0.03	8,570
Turkey	24 October 1945	0.34	60,227
Turkmenistan	2 March 1992	0.04	3,714
Uganda	25 October 1962	0.01	19,940
Ukraine	24 October 1945	1.48	52,000
United Arab Emirates	9 December 1971	0.19	1,206
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	24 October 1945	5.27	58,191
United Republic of Tanzania	14 December 1961	0.01	28,019
United States of America	24 October 1945	25.00	258,233
Uruguay	18 December 1945	0.04	3,149
Uzbekistan	2 March 1992	0.19	21,860
Vanuatu	15 September 1981	0.01	156
Venezuela	15 November 1945	0.40	20,712
Viet Nam	20 September 1977	0.01	71,324
Yemen	30 September 1947	0.01	12,302
Yugoslavia	24 October 1945	0.11	10,519
Zaire	20 September 1960	0.01	41,231
Zambia	1 December 1964	0.01	8,936
Zimbabwe	25 August 1980	0.01	10,739

*The assessment rate was not determined at this date.

THE UNITED NATIONS AT 50:
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Agenda 21: The UN Programme of Action from Rio. UN/DPI. 1992. New York. 294 pages. DPI/1344. Sales No. E.93.I.11. ISBN 92-1-100509-4. $25. E/F. S in 1996. (a)ii
The complete text of the recommendations adopted at the Earth Summit — the UN Conference on Environment and Development — which together set out a comprehensive blueprint for achieving sustainable development.

An Agenda for Development. By Boutros Boutros-Ghali, Secretary-General of the United Nations. New York. UN/DPI. 1995. 132 pages. DPI/1622/DEV. Sales No. E.95.I.16. ISBN 92-1-100556-6. $7.50. A/C/E/F/R/S. (a)ii
Outlines principles to guide global development. Shows how the development process is linked to peace, economy, environment, society and democracy.

An Agenda for Peace, Second Edition. By Boutros Boutros-Ghali, Secretary-General of the United Nations. New York. UN/DPI. 1995. 155 pages. DPI/1623/PKO. Sales No. E.95.I.15. ISBN 92-1-100555-8. $7.50. A/C/E/F/R/S. (a)ii
Analyzes and recommends ways of strengthening the capacity of the UN for preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, peace-keeping and post-conflict peace-building.

Basic Facts About the United Nations, 1995 edition. UN/DPI. New York. 299 pages. DPI/1580. $7.50. Forthcoming. (a)ii
Presents an overview of the activities of the United Nations and its Specialized Agencies.

The Blue Helmets. UN/DPI. 1990. 571 pages. DPI/1065. Sales No. E.90.I.18. ISBN: 92-1-100444-6. $8.95. (a)ii
A review of United Nations peace-keeping. It contains a comprehensive account of the peace-keeping operations of the United Nations from their inception in 1948 up to June 1990.

Building Peace and Development, 1994. By Boutros Boutros-Ghali, Secretary-General of the United Nations. UN/DPI. New York. October 1994. 299 pages. DPI/1537. Sales No. E.95.I.3. ISBN 92-1-100541-8. $9.95. (a)ii
Annual Report on the Work of the Organization.

Change: Threat or Opportunity for Human Progress? New York. UNDP. 1991. Sales No. E.91.III.B.10. 5-volume set. $75.00. E. (b)
Analysis of worldwide changes and their possible impact on humankind's future. Reflects views and visions of more than 80 world-renowned experts. Vol. 1: Political Change; vol. 2: Economic Change; vol. 3: Globalization of Markets; vol. 4: Changes in the Human Dimension of Development, Ethics and Values; vol. 5: Ecological Change: Environment, Development and Poverty Linkages.

E: English, F: French, S: Spanish

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*The letters in parentheses at the end of each entry indicate where these publications can be obtained. Please see page 84.

Charter of the United Nations and Statute of the International Court of Justice. UN/DPI. 87 pages. DPI/511. $1.00. (a)ii

Children and Development in the 1990s: A UNICEF Sourcebook on the Occasion of the World Summit for Children. UNICEF. 1990. Sales No. E.90.XX.USA.8. $35.00. E. **(d)**
Organized around a set of ambitious goals for children in the 1990s. Discusses economic conditions necessary to make the goals feasible.

The Crisis of Social Development in the 1990s: Preparing for the World Social Summit. Geneva. UNRISD. 1994. 57 pages. E. **(f)**
Includes the following sections: Rethinking social development in the 1990s; Economic restructuring and new social policies; Ethnic diversity and public policies; The challenge of rebuilding war-torn societies.

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This main reference publication of the Centre for Disarmament Affairs covers the work of the global multilateral deliberating and negotiating bodies in the field of disarmament as well as significant developments outside the framework of the UN.

The Cultural Dimension of Development: Towards a Practical Approach. Paris. UNESCO. 1994. 200 pages. ISBN: 92-3-103043-4. $20. E/F/S. **(e)**
Describes the means for integrating cultural factors into development.

Environment, Employment and Development (ed. A. S. Bhalla). Geneva. ILO. 1992. ISBN: 92-2-108250-4. Sw F 25.00. E. **(g)**
Examines employment implications of sustainable development, reviews approaches to minimizing environmental degradation and looks at environmentally sound approaches to employment promotion.

A Guide to Information at the United Nations. UN/DPI. New York. 1995. 121 pages. DPI/1444. Sales No. E.95.I.4. ISBN: 92-1-100542-6. $10.00. E/F/S. **(a)**ii
Contains entries on each of the principal organizations and bodies in the UN system, briefly describing what they do, the kind of information available and whom to contact for further questions. A comprehensive index provides the names of the United Nations offices dealing with the major areas of international and regional concern.

Human Development Report. New York. UNDP. 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994. ISBN 0-19-508457-8. $17.95 paperback. $29.95 clothbound. E/F/S. **(a)**iii
Assesses the state of human development worldwide and suggests practical actions for increasing the national and external aid resources allocated to health, education and employment. 1990: Concept and Measurement of Human Development; 1991: Financing Human Development; 1992: Global Dimensions of Human Development; 1993: People's Participation; 1994: New Dimensions of Human Security; 1995: Gender and Development.

Implementation of the Global Strategy for Health for All by the Year 2000. Second Evaluation. 8th Report on the World Health Situation. Volume I. Global review. Geneva. WHO. 1993. 184 pages. ISBN: 92-4-160281-3. SwF 31.50. E/F/S. **(i)**

Provides a global overview of changes in the world health situation as determined through analysis of data submitted by 151 countries for 1985-1990.

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Reviews recent developments and prospects, as well as selected issues in domestic policy reforms and donor response to the special needs and circumstances of least developed countries.

The Model United Nations. UN/DPI. Video and Book set. (Video length, 20 minutes; book, 32 pages). Video Sales No. E.92.I.24. Book Sales No. E.92.I.23. ISBN: 92-1-100492-6. Video and book set, $20.00. Book alone, $5.00. **(a)ii**
A brief introduction to the Model United Nations experience, this booklet presents an overview of the United Nations system and how the Model United Nations relates to the Organization. Teachers are walked through ways on how to prepare, role-play and evaluate the experience.

Monitoring Social Progress in the 1990s: Data Constraints, Concerns and Priorities (by David G. Westendorff and Dharam Ghai). UK/USA. UNRISD. 1993. 348 pages. E. **(f)**
Examines the limitations of social data, especially in developing countries, and identifies a number of strategies for improving data quality in the short and medium term.

New Imperatives of Human Security (by Mahbub ul Haq). A policy paper commissioned by UNDP for the World Summit for Social Development. UNDP. New York. 1994. **(b)**
The author suggests a new concept of security to move from arms and territorial security to the security of people and individuals through development and the evolution of a global civil society.

Notes for Speakers: Social Development. UN/DPI. January 1995. DPI/1625/SOC/CON. **(a)i**
A 78-page briefing paper designed for use by UN officials and governmental, academic, media and non-governmental representatives reviewing the issues of social development, with particular focus on the work of the United Nations in the areas of poverty, employment and social integration.

Notes for Speakers: The Advancement of Women. UN/DPI. April 1995. DPI/1674/WOM/CON. **(a)i**
A 92-page briefing paper designed for use by UN officials and government, academic, media and non-governmental representatives reviewing the issues around the advancement of women with particular attention to the role of the United Nations system and the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995.)

The Progress of Nations. New York. UNICEF. 1994. 51 pages. E/F/S (and other languages). $6.95. **(d)**
The nations of the world ranked according to their achievements in health, nutrition, education, family planning and progress for women.

Report on the World Social Situation 1993. New York. United Nations. 1993. Sales No. E.93.IV.2. $ 24.95. E/F/S. **(a)ii**
Issues discussed in this report concern the balance between economic efficiency and social justice; the interaction between the social functions of the State; market responses to social demand and the imperatives of sustainable development; the equalization of opportunity for all members of society; the more effective delivery of social services for the more disadvantaged sectors of society; and the mobilization of resources for social development at the local, national, regional and international levels. It analyzes policy choices in several countries.

The Situation of Elderly Women. Available Statistics and Indicators. Santo Domingo. INSTRAW. 1994. **(l)**
Overview of the situation of elderly women in different regions of the world using comparative statistics and indicators. Identifies existing data gaps.

State of Food and Agriculture 1993. Rome. FAO. 1993. 300 pages. ISBN: 92-5-103360-9. $40.00. E/F/S. **(m)**
Discusses recent developments affecting the global agricultural situation. Appraises future prospects and reports on regional trends.

The State of the World's Children 1995. New York. UNICEF. 89 pages. $8.50. Translated into many languages. A free 12-page summary is available. **(d)**
Describes progress made in children's health against disease and poor nutrition. Notes that the principal threat to the poorest comes from the mutually reinforcing problems of poverty, population growth and environmental deterioration.

The State of World Population 1994. New York. UNFPA. Annual Report. E/F/S. **(n)**
Annual report on the major issues and activities related to world population.

The State of the World's Refugees: The Challenge of Protection. New York. UNHCR. 1993. Biennial Report. 208 pages. ISBN: 0-14-023487-X. $ 14.00. E/F/S. **(o)**
Covers wide range of key issues affecting refugees, including many that are linked to fundamental questions of peace and international security.

The State of World Rural Poverty: An Inquiry into Its Causes and Consequences, published for the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) by New York University Press. 513 pages. ISBN: 92-9072-003-4. E.
Proposes new approaches to poverty alleviation among rural poor, particularly in developing countries and counters longstanding misconceptions that have discouraged effective utilization of human resources potential in rural areas.

Statistical Yearbook, 39th edition. UN Statistical Office. 1994. 1,055 pages. Sales No. B.94.XVII.1 H. ISBN: 92-1-061159-4. $110. **(a)ii**
A comprehensive compendium of vital internationally comparable data for the analysis of socio-economic development at the world, regional and national levels. It provides data on world economy, its structure, major trends and current performance, as well as on issues such as world population, employment, inflation, production of energy, supply of food, external debt of developing countries, education, availability of dwellings, production of energy, development of new energy sources and environmental pollution and management.

UN Chronicle. UN/DPI. Annual subscription, $20.00. **(a)ii**
Issued quarterly, this magazine provides full coverage of the wide-ranging activities of the UN system. Information is presented on issues ranging from food and health to peace-keeping and the world economy. Highlights of the Security Council and General Assembly sessions are described putting into perspective complex international issues.

Visions of the Future of Social Justice: Essays on the Occasion of the ILO's 75th Anniversary. Geneva. ILO. 1994. ISBN: 92-2-108011-0. Price not yet fixed. E/F/S. **(g)**
Presents views on the future of the world of work and employment. Examines the social clause in international trade agreements, the reintegration of those excluded from economic activity, social dialogue and international labour standards.

Women: New Challenges for the Twenty-First Century. UN/DPI. 1995. 180 pages. Sales No. 95.I.40. ISBN: 92-1-100592-2. $14.95. **(a)ii**
This updated edition of Women: Challenges to the Year 2000 reviews the dramatic opportunities becoming available to women, especially in the areas of health and work.

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World Investment Report 1995: Transnational Corporations and Competitiveness. UNCTAD. 446 pages. Sales No. E.95.II.A. $45.00. **(a)ii**
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World Labour Report. Geneva. ILO. 1994. ISBN 92-2-108009-9. SwF 22.50. E/F/S.
Contains an employment survey focusing on issues such as sharing work and family responsibilities, employers' organizations, financing and managing health care, chemicals and the work environment.

1994 World Survey on the Role of Women in Development. New York. United Nations. 1994. Sales No. E.95.IV.1. ISBN: 92-1-130163-7. $9.95. E/F/S. **(a)ii**
Provides a comprehensive analysis of policy issues and concepts related to the advancement of women highlighting gender approach to poverty and employment.

The World's Women 1970-1995: Trends and Statistics. New York. UN Statistical Office. 1994. Sales No. E.95.XVII.2. ISBN: 92-1-161372-8. $15.95. E. **(a)ii**

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(k) *World Bank:*
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(l) *INSTRAW (International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women):*
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Public Information. Case Postale 2500. 1211 Geneva 2 Depot. Switzerland.

Effective Public Speaking

SOME SUGGESTIONS

Think of speakers who have impressed you. It's likely that they share certain characteristics: an ability to bring dry facts to life, solid knowledge, commitment and a strong desire to communicate. To help those who write speeches and presentations, ***Notes for Speakers*** assembles in convenient form current information about the UN and selected issues before it. Good factual content is a vital prerequisite for effective public speaking about the UN.

Every topic and audience demands a different approach. On some formal occasions, simply reading a message or a statement may be appropriate. But most general audiences need a sense of interaction with a speaker, and each speaker develops his or her own style and techniques for reaching them. A series of workshops in public speaking for Secretariat officials at UN Headquarters provided practical suggestions for combining content and delivery in public speaking. A few of those suggestions follow.

STRUCTURE

Your speech should have a clear opening, body and closing. The opening should be just two or three minutes long. An opening anecdote, analogy or quote can help crystallize your central message. The body of the speech should consist of brief and well-organized points. Information should be carefully selected to support the central theme and draw on examples, analogies or real-life experiences to animate the topic. Numbers and ratios should be made meaningful by relating them to the experience of the audience. Resist the temptation to say everything you know about a topic. Too much information can be worse than not enough. The body should be 10 to 15 minutes long. The closing should briefly summarize the speech and state its three most important points in one or two minutes.

DELIVERY

Establish real communication with your audience by focusing on them and not "locking" your eyes on your text. Finish each phrase looking at your audience, and look at them to emphasize points or raise questions. Know your topic well enough to depart from the text and extemporize without losing the connection to your main points. Use language that is easily spoken and understood.

Stand with your weight even on both feet. Gestures and facial expressions should be animated and natural, and reinforce main points. Project your voice. An audience that can't hear you can't be interested in what you have to say.

TEXT

It may help to make three versions of your speech: a complete, edited text in paragraph form; a version marked for delivery with underlined words or phrases for emphasis and slashes to separate phrases; and a version that places each phrase on a separate line for ease of reading (a few sample lines of the latter formats follow). Leave wide margins in your text for notes and reminders. Don't staple your text. Slide each page to the side so you can see both the previous and next page.

SAMPLE LAYOUTS

(Edited version with phrasing marks)
Not long ago/I was at a meeting with a colleague who had a terrible toothache./ And although the meeting was about the suffering of people living in poverty/it made very little impact on him./ The pain he was enduring at that moment was far more relevant/than the plight of strangers thousands of miles away./

People who come from developing countries/tend to think that people in the richer, industrialized countries don't realize how severe their problems are,/ because the rich are too absorbed in their own immediate problems./ Although the UN is not an international financial institution/like the World Bank and IMF,/it has an important role to play in international economic problems./ All voices are heard in its debates — /from the poorest countries to the richest. They remind us that all of our economies are interdependent,/and that the problems we face individually/require us to work together.

(Line-by-line version)

1. NOT LONG AGO
I WAS AT A MEETING WITH A COLLEAGUE
WHO HAD A TERRIBLE TOOTHACHE.

2. AND ALTHOUGH THE MEETING WAS ABOUT THE SUFFERING OF PEOPLE
LIVING IN POVERTY
IT MADE VERY LITTLE IMPACT ON HIM.

3. THE PAIN HE WAS ENDURING AT THAT MOMENT
WAS FAR MORE RELEVANT THAN THE PLIGHT OF STRANGERS
THOUSANDS OF MILES AWAY.

4. PEOPLE WHO COME FROM DEVELOPING COUNTRIES
TEND TO THINK
THAT PEOPLE IN THE RICHER, INDUSTRIALIZED COUNTRIES
DON'T REALIZE
HOW SEVERE THEIR PROBLEMS ARE.

5. BECAUSE THE RICH ARE TOO ABSORBED IN THEIR OWN PROBLEMS.

6. ALTHOUGH THE UN IS NOT AN INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL
INSTITUTION
LIKE THE WORLD BANK AND IMF
IT HAS AN IMPORTANT ROLE TO PLAY
IN THE WORLD'S ECONOMIC PROBLEMS.

7. ALL VOICES ARE HEARD IN ITS DEBATES ...
   FROM THE POOREST COUNTRIES
   TO THE RICHEST.

8. THEY REMIND US
   THAT ALL OF OUR ECONOMIES ARE INTERDEPENDENT ...
   AND THAT THE PROBLEMS WE FACE INDIVIDUALLY
   REQUIRE US TO WORK TOGETHER.

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